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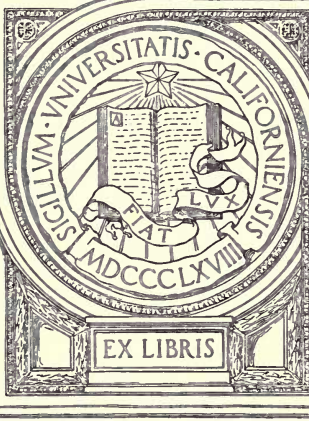

A

WHIG's APOLOGY

FOR

HIS CONSISTENCY;

IN

A LETTER

FROM

A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

TO

HIS FRIEND

IN THE BOROUGH OF ****.

Robert Adair

London:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly.

1795.

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A WHIG's APOLOGY, &c. &c.

SIR,

THE intelligence you send me from **** is by no means unexpected. Popularity has seldom been attached to the sentiments of a Whig. Whether he acts in a party, or individually pursues the dictates of his conscience, the true, consistent Whig never steps aside from his purpose to close in with the prevailing politics of the day. Educated in this way of thinking, I have always, as you know very well, entertained a great dislike for schemes which profess to please all parties. No man succeeds at this game who holds any serious opinions of his duty. Wise, or honest politicians never try it. In the awful period of our affairs which we have now reached, where scarcely a choice is left except between the worst extremes, perhaps it is not easy to please ourselves. Yet more difficult is it so to shape and fashion our opinions, as to produce a common sentiment among any

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considerable number of persons. But at once to satisfy those who may be disposed to agree, to conciliate those who differ, and to preserve our own consistency, seems a young and sanguine hope with little except its benevolence to recommend it. You must not, therefore, expect from me testimonies of any stronger feeling than regret, on hearing that several of my constituents at ****, yourself among the number, have expressed dissatisfaction in regard to some parts of my late conduct in Parliament. To your sense and candour I am now about to submit an explanation of its motives, and entreat that through your means it may receive the same advantages of circulation and publicity which have not, I find, been denied to the calumnies that were meant to ruin me in your esteem.

You will acknowledge by this proceeding, as I hope you will soon discover by the sentiments it is intended to convey, how little I am disposed to quit that middle path in which, as your representative, and in unison with your wishes, I have journeyed on for so many years. You will see that I have neither the expectation of improving our own state of things by any infusion of the new principles, nor think the mischief with which we are threatened by their prevalence to be averted by the dereliction of those on which I have conceived the whole

of my public pretensions to rest: that I can neither soften the inveteracy of opinions imbibed from the earliest times, and confirmed by the observation of every day, which compel me to look to the system on which government is administered as the source of every ill that has befallen us, nor change the habits by which my conduct has been regulated to a moderate indeed, but to a decided course, in compliance with any modern superstitions, or with the terrors they inspire. Strengthened and supported by these habits, they did in effect determine my choice in the hour of doubt which first divided us, and must govern and guide me through the tempest when doubt and deliberation shall be no more. I know that it will be far from an easy task to keep our balance. Extreme liberty and extreme law, anarchy and arbitrary power, and all the evils of both, will alternately be danced before our eyes, as it may suit the purpose of eloquence to persuade, or of artifice to puzzle us. All that we, plain unrefining men, have been labouring to settle in our minds under the impression of a stationary duty, will be assailed through our fears, through our hopes, and possibly through our affections. We must endeavour to resist them all. Alike unwilling and unable to investigate the subtlety of contending theories, we know that there is one safe,

easy track in which, while we are content to tread, we can never miss our way. Where imagination is likely to mislead, or passion to disturb, or sagacity to fail, we must have recourse to our memories and experience.

I own to you Sir, that I look upon these times, big as they seem with events too mighty for our speculations, with infinitely less apprehension as far as my own actions may be concerned in them, from having, as I must think, begun at the right end, and impressed my mind very early with a persuasion that the Whig doctrine I was embracing was true, wise, practicable, and would be serviceable to me in all difficulties: that it was a doctrine from which no circumstances of convenience could justify my departure, as it was itself formed very much upon a principle of convenience, and even had in it something of foresight into the perilous extremities with which we are threatened. I had imagined it to be one great quality of these principles, in the doubtful crisis of public ferment when all things else are fluctuating and insecure, to keep the mind of him who should profess them collected and unshaken; nor was it wholly without a view to such a time that I confirmed and invigorated myself in them; in order not to be caught unawares, and in the midst of confusion and trouble to have

that to seek which chiefly in such a moment I should want to use. To be ever pressing as far as they will go, discussions upon obedience and responsibility; to be even limiting, and distinguishing, and defining where submission should end, and resistance begin; to be habitually putting cases upon the supposed ruin of the constitution, I hold to be a most unwise practice; but perhaps it is as bad to make no provision in our own minds for these disastrous possibilities. Indeed there passes not a day which does not discover to him who has gained it, the full value of such dangerous knowledge.

You will neither find me therefore in what I offer you, making use of "principles too big for my purpose," nor compromising, I hope, in one single thought or expression the fair cause of liberty, in whatever corner of the world she displays her banner. Ill would he deserve to be your representative who proves recreant to that cause. But the liberty I most love, is that by which I have most been benefitted,---a plain, practical liberty, such as she is to be found in the British constitution, where she resides, and through which she acts. Very warmly disposed towards the liberty of other countries, I acknowledge my chief solicitude to be for that of my own. I can support no government therefore, which does not both in its construction and in its

march, discover the inclination and the means of providing for, and securing this liberty, not agreeable to vague and capricious fancies, but according to the provisions of known law, the long received interpretations of custom, and the examples of the best men in the best times. Every attempt to administer government in any other manner, every system that either from some error in its plan, or some great depravity in the persons chosen to give it effect, is not capable of being made to harmonize with these principles, I hold to be vicious, destructive, and such as to call for our opposition to it by all lawful methods. If upon the occurrence of any extraordinary emergency, there should arise a necessity of co-operating with those who for the time being are entrusted with the direction of the public force, it will be incumbent upon all Persons who think in general as I do, upon the subject of government, carefully to distinguish a casual support, which necessity rather extorts than preference bestows, from that personal confidence which arises from the opinion that power is in the hands of those who deserve it most, and can use it best. But the duty of general mistrust remains unaltered. It is of a severe, vigilant, active quality; and any suspension of it demands, *prima facie*, an explanation, which

I will not deny may either be found in the notoriety of imminent danger, or deduced from the reasonable probability of it. I have ever been of the number of those who reject the doctrine of agency, and deny that members of parliament are bound at all times, and indiscriminately, to obey what are called instructions from their constituents. But if you admit (as I think you do) to me that, as members of parliament, we are not in a state of servile dependence which precludes in what we do for your service all exercise of our discretion, we must concede, on our side, that in charging ourselves with so heavy a trust we make ourselves parties to a cause the very first obligation of which is to see it to its end: not to abandon the conclusion of it on any sudden caprice of ours, or in obedience to any foreign impulse whatever. Taking upon us to judge of what is best for those who send us hither, they surely will have just ground of complaint against us if we are led off from the practical duties of the public life we have embraced by whims and fancies, or driven into the arms of what we think in our consciences a corrupt, an incapable, and a treacherous administration, by the dread, forsooth, that our perseverance in hostility to it will afford aid to some silly projectors. They must think us mere triflers indeed if we suffer these ter-

rors not only to disarm our vigilance, but to invade our dearest attachments, and triumph over formed and solid friendships, the growth of many years, and many trials. For myself I will frankly acknowledge that I would rather obtain the character of a diligent member of parliament, constantly and assiduously in his place, watching the conduct of ministers, than be the author of any one of those contrivances which is to perfect our crazy system, and drive away strife and wickedness from the world, or even the most renowned of those dissertations in which alone the memory of such projects will live by the eloquence with which they are reprobated. In these narrow trammels your representative is content to walk, nor is he disgusted with the humility of his pursuits by the consideration that to execute their objects with fidelity has hitherto been found sufficient to employ the largest faculties of the human mind during the longest period alloted to human existence, is a scope for the most active benevolence, and the highest virtue, and the proudest genius that ever illuminated the earth.

If such feelings unfit me for an association either with those lofty spirits who would regenerate, or those who would enslave mankind, they suit at least the sphere in which it has been your will that I should

move. They have taught me to be content with the good within my reach, and to preserve for you and defend to the utmost that which I have ever esteemed a system of real and substantial liberty. What shall be our course hereafter, perhaps it is in the sagacity of few to discern, and in the power of none to determine. We are, indeed, in a situation the dangers of which I can limit to no description, or degree: a situation in which the ills we know not, scarcely can suppress the ills we have; one from which if ever we escape we shall owe more to chance and patience than I fear either to our wisdom or our virtue. Ministers themselves have told you that it can no longer be dissembled. I write to you Sir, indeed, under the most awful impressions. I conceive myself to be taking a solemn and a last leave of all that from my infancy I have held dear in the political establishment of my country. This contest has generated a way of thinking on the topics of ordinary life so intirely its own that whatever may be the end of our present troubles I see little hope of reviving any one genuine constitutional feeling among us. I know not how it may strike you and the generality of those for whom this letter is meant, but for myself I have the sad consolation of reflecting that it does not come upon me by surprize. For

this day of death I have been long preparing. Early and continued adversity has taught me in what posture to receive the blow. Take it not amiss therefore, that, in this temper of mind, I think lightly of the value of any defence or apology whatever; or that what I offer should be rather in the spirit of warning to you, than vindication of myself. I am far from indifferent to the good opinion of my fellow-citizens in general: least of all to your's, to whom have been dedicated the labours of my life: but we have now reached that state from which all factitious relations must disappear. The reward of honest service, or the punishment of guilty versatility must wait the decision of an age yet too distant from our own to be swayed by any common reciprocations of esteem or flattery between us. He that is thoroughly impressed with a sense of this as of a truth he is about to experience, feels himself in a situation in which, if he cannot be silent, it is easiest for him to be sincere. Nothing remains to divert his attention from the scene that is closing upon his eyes. Nothing on this side society to interest his hopes or alarm his fears. His exertions have been given to his country; his accounts are ready; the rest is for his fame.

Had I therefore no better hold upon your good opinion, I should expect some

credit for my motives from having undertaken to explain them to you at a moment in which no dissimulation can avail me. Which ever of the two mischiefs by which this isle is frighted from her propriety shall become prevalent, there is equally an end of all the service you can receive from men of my principles. The habits of our whole lives have confirmed us so much in enmity to both, that we must hope for as little lenity from those they call jacobins, as we receive from those by whom jacobinism is imputed to us. As we still think, and mean, while we have the power, to act upon the persuasion, that between *jacobinism*, (as the phrase runs, and the system of those who have undertaken to cure it, there is a medium, and that medium our constitution, proscription and persecution are the mildest destinies that await us from either. By the first of these factions we are called the advocates of slavery: the second already prepares its fire and faggot to cure us of republicanism. All this is in order. Let me add, such are precisely the sort of accusations, I would wish to come from such quarters. From me therefore, as they deter me from no duty, they shall draw no complaint. Who indeed, from such adversaries ever hopes for plain dealing? Why should I expect that Ministers, with whom we are first at issue on a ques-

tion of immediate preservation, would depart from their usual practice, and discover towards men who think as I do, any of the mercy of a fair and liberal hostility? To desist from misrepresentation were to confess themselves conquered. At present it is some proof of spirit, at least among those who have taste to admire such ministers, that misfortunes which have bowed down the pride of their country, possess no power over the stubborn malice of their defamation, or lower their tone to one single sentiment of truth or reason. Who shall undertake for such men that they will learn moderation from adversity? They over whose heads the American war has passed without instructing them in any thing but the tricks by which wars are supported, may well calculate upon putting off the hour of repentance and retribution. These are the spoiled children of a credulous dotard people who encourage their froward malice to rail at and scold at their pleasure all the old faithful servants of the mansion. But we shall receive our dismission from no hands but your's: we shall take none of their insolent warnings, or leave them to the bent of their own mischevious inclinations. Then let them call *jacobin* till the very echo is hoarse.

Do me the justice to believe, that if I have so long deferred submitting these

matters to you, as certainly it was known to me long ago that we had ceased to think alike upon publick affairs, I have been actuated neither by disregard to your wishes, nor by any desire of shunning enquiry. All of you remember and lament the separation of the Whig party. With no means of averting that misfortune beyond the influence of my individual voice, it happened to me to be near enough to witness the origin of many of those measures which brought it about. Yet although withheld from participating in them by a mixed sentiment of regret and distaste, I could not avoid taking my share, as a servant of the publick, in the consequences to which they led. Thus circumstanced, and knowing that the justification of ourselves is often mistaken for an attack on those who differ from us, I carefully abstained from any step which might tend to throw impediment in the way of conciliation. While there was a chance that time, reason, the magnitude of events, and the impending dangers of our country, could heal our divisions, and bring men, in spite of artifice and refinement, to act upon some acknowledged view of our situation, I was willing to let matters quietly take their course, and risque my vindication with you upon the general settlement of our party differences

with each other. Long, therefore, did I watch their progress, in mute restraint and painful expectation. That period is passed. Nothing now remains but to perform the last sad offices, and give to the grave all the fond hopes with which our long union and consistency had inspired me. Released from this sweet bondage, ill exchanged for the barren freedom of individuality, I can now fully go into the particulars of my conduct during three years of as sharp and trying difficulty as it ever fell to the lot of man to struggle with. What that conduct is, how it accords with that which preceded it, what promise it offers for the future, if the future shall yet be ours, these are questions which I can now desire you to sift, and probe to the bottom, with as little fear for others as I ever entertained for myself. Not that I can yet promise to trace with a steady hand the story of our unfortunate divisions. Who that remembers the proud party assembled under the auspices of the marquis of Rockingham, and whose object it was to form a balance against even the crown itself in favour of the people, and the popular part of our constitution---who that has to boast a share in its immortal acts, can contemplate without sorrow, or describe without shame, the spectacle of ruin and degradation it now exhibits; dis-

persed and dishonoured,---its chiefs in hopeless bondage to the power they had combined to limit, and that haughty instrument of its will from whose hands they would have torn its symbols? For one, I am wholly unfit for this task. I cannot begin a fresh conflict while the wounds are yet green which were dealt me in the last, from little less than a brother's hand. I think that I know as well as any man what it is to act from a sense of duty. Severe and inflexible, it forces us to keep our ground, and bear up against the public evils brought on by the ill considered measures often of our best friends. But more is not to be expected. Nature and our hearts are beyond its jurisdiction. Pardon, Sir, these infirmities, if such they are, and think not the worse of my defence if it spare them all reproach, and confine itself, as far as they may be concerned, to suggestions for their own prudence.

Indeed, with every sentiment of preference for the side I have chosen, I am not disposed to push my condemnation of others further than the circumstances themselves demand. You would not have me rake in the filth and mire of accusations which I have a thousand times reprobated when in the mouths of their worst enemies, for the sake of a discovery which, if true, must destroy all future confidence

in man, by degrading human nature in some of its fairest examples. It is to my shame, perhaps, but I own that my way of feeling is quite the reverse. Instead of searching for common places against the former Whigs in the old magazines of scurrility, first collected by the malignant activity of their present associates, I confess that the separation from persons in whose society I have passed a long and toilsome period of life with little sense of its cares, never recurs to me without renewing the most painful emotions. Possibly it is the size of this misfortune that imposes silence on all the fretful feelings which beget complaint and its corresponding animosities. The great national adversity which this separation has brought home to us, acts upon me as adversity ought, by subjugating the minor passions to its mighty law, and cleansing them from the feculence of uncharitableness and revenge. No, Sir, it was not a paltry eagerness for power, or place, which rent asunder this generous combination of talents and virtues. Never shall the just resentments of abjured friendship teach me thus to calumniate the services of so many trying years. The whole of their conduct who have separated from us, (I speak with the exception of a very few) originates in a sincere, but in my opinion, ill-founded

alarm. I think by mistaking the proximity of their own description of danger, they mistook the nature and true species of our danger itself. In fact the point from which the two branches of our party diverged, was so near to the sentiments and principles of each, that many persons who have been able to contemplate without passion the events which brought it about, have wondered why it ever happened. It may sound somewhat paradoxical to those who look only to things as they find them---but to me it seems, and this aggravates the misfortune an hundred fold,---that we separated with no difference of principle, properly so called, under the influence of nothing corrupt or disreputable, and with every disposition in the world to keep together. Those causes which produce disunion among common men, in the common affairs of the world, were here supplied first, by a great and generally admitted pressure of circumstances, and secondly, by a system of well-contrived, methodized cunning, which called up by turns to its aid, with a dexterity scarcely credible even in the highest finisher of small frauds, the angry vehemence of some, the honest prejudices of others, and the fat, idiot imbecility of the people at large. Let me not be thought to lessen the importance of those points on which we differed.

Alas! the world is bearing bloody testimony to it at this hour. We owe to this strange, and perverted way of seeing the same subject, and the obstinate pursuit of the measures it has suggested, the miseries of a dreadful war, and the still increasing bitterness of our domestic dissentions. You will understand me therefore as speaking of the character of our differences when I venture to class them rather with those which are derived from considerations of policy and prudence, than with those which flow from opposing principle. Such I think you will find them to be in general. Wide, deep, irreconcileable in their present state, but in their origin so nice and narrow, as to be traceable to a co-incidence of principle, and in many things even to a similarity, as to means, in some of the most essential articles of national interest.

Yielding thus at last to a necessity I always acknowledged, of submitting to those who have, through me, an interest so immediate and particular in the public transactions, a full explanation of my share in them, I come to demand judgment at your hands. Impressed, however, with a sense of the extreme delicacy of this subject, as well as of its importance, since possibly the course of our future lives may receive its bent and

direction from our conduct now as explained by our motives, I cannot, Sir, think of trusting this task out of my own hands. As little can I undertake it for any one else. I must beg you, therefore, to consider the sentiments you may meet with here, as those for which I alone am responsible; and for that same reason, with the exception of one single document, thus put in my early claim to be bound by no other. I am in doubt, however, whether the piece alluded to can be stated as an exception. It is history. It is authority. It rests upon the same foundation that ensures stability to doctrine, and obedience to government itself. It is a memorial which if every other title of its great author to celebrity were obliterated, would alone fix that high character by one common suffrage bestowed upon him in whatever corner of the world his name is pronounced. Even this sober age is not without its prophets; but it is the triumph of reason that she is copied by superstition. The latest posterity to which the story of this day shall descend, will recognize that intuitive mind with which he looked through the dark times before him at a glance, and discerned in their embryo the evils of which in vain he warned mankind. Mr. Fox's letter to his constituents was written in December, 1792. In stating the motives of his con-

duct on his three motions early in that session, his sagacity has traced an outline so clear and definite, that there is no flying off from it except by the denial of demonstrated truth. Taking, therefore, that document for my guide, and grounding upon it the whole of what I shall trouble you with in the way of exculpation, I desire no better than to go to trial upon the whole question of our present state; of the justice, necessity, and wisdom of this war; of its effect upon your national honour; and of the security your government derives from it, and from the system of administration which it has created.

That which I find has been chiefly reproached to me by some of my most valuable friends, is an inconsistency, as they call it, between my known opinions both with regard to foreign policy, and our domestic government, and my conduct in Parliament of late whenever these subjects have come under discussion. They think, it seems, that a man so antigallican as I, one who so much reprobates both the crimes and the principles on which France has established her republic, and who confesses himself so much alarmed at her victories, should have given his support to the war quite as a thing of course. They profess to be as much surprised that, with my notions about reforms of parliament, and other popular

topics, I should have opposed any of those measures which ministers have adopted to discourage them. While these impressions have gained ground against me in some quarters, a very different language is held in others. Little credit is given to my opposition by persons who, mistaking the whole spirit of that in which my principles have engaged me, conceive that it ought necessarily to have embraced all those circumstances of accident which help to captivate light and giddy minds. How can he be sincere, it is asked, in his dislike of this war, who sticks to the notions of the old school, and in spite of the revolution which philosophy has accomplished in France, feeds and nurses up his ancient prejudices against her power, and jealousy of her ambition? Of what value are those pretensions to patriotism, which instead of keeping pace with the discoveries of an enlightened age, obstinately reject all invitation to improvement, and although equally detesting persecution, assist its advocates to discountenance every rising effort of liberty? Assailed in this manner by both sides, and pressed by each alike with the nature and urgency of the times, I have yet been hardy enough to persevere in a middle course. The result is what I have expected. No one is content. Really, Sir, under a full conviction of having done the best for

your service, I cannot discommend the zeal with which men, living as you do at a distance from the scene, are apt to canvass these sort of questions. I do feel that there is much to be said in excuse for those, who calling out in such a moment for decision, which they are unable to see in any thing that looks like an endeavour to preserve a medium, have reproached me on some occasions with fear, at others with much worse. I have long observed that it is with the greatest difficulty you ever acquire a knowledge of the commonest facts. For the opinions of our parliamentary leaders, your very best authority is a news-paper. Opinions arising from facts, you are not likely therefore to hear at any time; but when you reflect upon the sort of transactions which are passing our doors every day, and the corresponding, commensurate opinions they must necessarily beget, to what a distance are you not thrown in every attempt to come at unadulterated truth? Indeed, I scarcely know how truth is to get to you. All ordinary methods of conveying a full idea of our situation since France has become the leading topic, must fall infinitely short of it. You can learn it by no statement of facts alone, however faithfully detailed. That situation, I fear, is too nearly connected with our passions! These you must have the means of develop-

ing and combining with facts before the clouds which obscure your sight can effectually be dispersed. You must travel back with me a great way to reach the true origin of our misfortunes; back to the sessions of 1791, and to that day, ever to be marked with a black stone, on which Mr. Burke declared in parliament his final separation from Mr. Fox.

That was, indeed, a day of mourning to the Whig cause. Then began to rush in upon us, through the yawning chasm left by this convulsion in our system, the full tide of those waters of bitterness of which we have so largely tasted. The more I reflect upon this event, the more am I inclined to refer the whole of our present misfortunes to that first variance in our party. A very superficial view of public affairs since the close of the war with America, will be sufficient to shew the vast influence which these two celebrated men have possessed over the conduct of government. Authority has great weight with the people of this country; trick and contrivance go a considerable way; corruption almost every where is welcome; and all things considered, government, in times of peace, is, in all its practical parts, a tolerably easy task among us. But still something is wanted for shew. With all these facilities, we require a pretext. I

know there are many ways of depriving talents and integrity of their proper ascendancy; and perhaps it is true, what is often reproached to us, that the most eloquent speech in parliament never gains an additional vote. Yet with all these bad propensities, enough remains of the popular spirit of our government to ensure to eloquence and distinguished abilities a degree of influence on the general conduct of affairs, sufficient to operate, surely, although imperceptibly, great public benefits. The treasures that are scattered are rarely lost. If sometimes they are thrown before swine, and trodden down in the mire, they are not unfrequently gathered up by the provident foresight of the minister himself, and thus brought into circulation by a shorter cut. Whoever has taken the pains to study the two great men of whom I am speaking, must have observed the truth of this. It cannot have escaped him that notwithstanding their proscription from court, and those official situations which give the immediate means of service, they had in their union, even under circumstances of considerable popular odium, often disconcerted and held in check the wild projects, and wasteful phrenzy of its ministers. They led the opinion of the country often against its knowledge, always against its will. Such for many years was their joint

efficacy and force; but not until that evil hour which called them forth in opposition to each other, was properly seen the whole compass of their mighty powers. Very early in the French revolution we that were the nearest began to tremble at their giant play. I think it was about the beginning of the year 1790, that an observation of Mr. Fox on the conduct of the French soldiery in a riot at Paris, drew from Mr. Burke some very severe strictures upon the leaders of that revolution. From that moment the question was thrown open to disputants of all sides: and here were discovered the first symptoms of a difference which was soon to shake society to its centre. It could be no less. Men of their size could not break company without dividing the world between them. The party they belonged to was not to be dissolved like a partnership in trade; neither could they, or either of them, quit that party, without risquing its destruction, and with that, the destruction of those public objects which it embraced. These lordly oaks, the pride of the forest, had struck root into the constitution itself, and could not be torn from its bosom without loosening the whole earth around, and withering the lesser plants that flourished beneath their shade.

To lead in this great conflict of opinion formed no part of the ambition of Mr.

Pitt. Who talks of *his* sentiments upon the French revolution? Who ever heard them? Strange as you may think it, he who pretends to the chief office in the British councils, and to stand at the head of Europe in a war of opinions, never on this most interesting subject has ventured one single opinion himself, which, by any chance, has excited common curiosity. It was not possible however that the conduct of a man in his very eminent station could be a matter of indifference to the world. I do not censure him, Sir, for not taking a part at once, and declaring in favour of the French revolution *as an example.* Assuredly it was right to see what would come of it, before any thing similar should be recommended to us. I am no enthusiast in these matters. As far as I know of their first constitution my dislike to it is very great. But to leave France to the trial of her experiment, was always in the power of an honest politician, and I think would have been the choice of a wise one. If they who governed the British councils had been disposed to act in the fair, *bona fide* meaning of such a determination, they would have discovered no shyness of speaking to foreign nations, in firm and becoming language, their sense, not of the experiment, but of the effort. This was the utmost that could be required of any mi-

nister; but so much, let me add, was required from any man holding that office with the views of a statesman. Unhappily Mr. Pitt had another use for it. If no opinions of his were worth a dispute, his interests were not a little concerned in promoting the disputes of others. What signified it to such a first lord of the treasury, busied as he was with his revenue regulations and details, whether France should succeed or perish in the attempt to limit her monarchy? This was a point he left to be settled among his adversaries. They differed. So much the better. The time would soon come which by making him the arbiter of their differences, must necessarily leave him the master of their fate. Sensible of the vantage ground he occupied, and that it was one from which he should be able, in any crisis, to guide the current of men's opinions just into what channel he pleased, he found himself deriving strength as a minister from that very circumstance which took away all consideration from him as a politician. By the part he should adopt, when a part was to be adopted at all, he found himself enabled to decide on no less a question than the existence of the country, connected with the perpetuity of his own power. To give away such an advantage for the barren purpose of doing good, never was dreamt

of in his philosophy. A great party in the House of Commons had long opposed his measures, condemned the principle of his appointment to office, and denied all credit or character to his administration. It was his first policy to break that party. He waited therefore to see to what extent the differences recently declared between the two chief persons in it would go, what objects and what men they would embrace, and how they were likely to be promoted by the importance, and the growing pressure of affairs themselves.

These three persons therefore, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, the two first distinguished by their renown, the third by his unbounded power, may be considered as laying at that time the foundations of three systems for the conduct of Great Britain, with distinct and very opposite views. What might have ensued from adopting either of those recommended by Mr. Burke, or Mr. Fox, no man, as they have never been tried, will pronounce. To that of Mr. Fox none of you would listen; and all the means of giving effect to Mr. Burke's, have been squandered upon the minister's experiment. To this therefore, I shall direct my chief enquiry; and must request a few moments of your attention to a short, and compressed narrative of some of the leading events which intervened

between the debate on the Quebec bill, and the sudden meeting of parliament in December 1792; in order to exhibit to you those causes, drawn from a mixed view of domestic and foreign affairs during that period, through which the country was entrapped into the unexplained, discretionary system of Mr. Pitt, to the exclusion of the other two, and by which it has been precipitated into its present situation of unexampled calamity and disgrace.

To begin with your foreign affairs. From one cause or other not necessary to detail in this place, Europe, at the first of these periods, was in a situation of very considerable embarassment. The Minister, by his restless intrigues, had successively stirred up a war against the Empress of Russia on the side of the Porte and Sweden, and a rebellion against the Emperor in the Austrian Netherlands. That spirit of disaffection which he had universally excited against the Austrian government, by means of Vandernoot and Van Eupen, a disaffection which in its consequences has visited Europe with the severest calamity it ever knew, which has twice thrown those rich provinces into the hands of France, and given her, it is to be feared, perpetual possession of Holland, had drawn off the Emperor from the Russian alliance. In the expectation from this event, of com-

pelling the Czarina to accept what terms he pleased, his vanity had dictated to her the conditions of a peace with the Turks, and his folly was preparing to enforce them. The result was far from flattering. The Empress of Russia rejected his proposals, laughed at his menace, and defied his power. To engage her to some concessions which might have the appearance of a salvo to his own honour, as soon as the session was closed he dispatched a minister to St. Petersburg, whose abilities, undoubtedly, were equal to any task, and whose character in settling the terms of pacification, if they should be unfavourable, might afford some protection to his own. The whole summer, however, was consumed in fruitless negociations. He had failed to bully; he was content to submit; and there was an end of the question. No sooner was this difference concluded than an object of higher interest arose, and the affairs of France began to occupy the cabinets of Europe. The situation of the royal family at Paris quickened the tardy conferences at Pillnitz. Of these, the general result is tolerably well known. It is true that no final determination was come to between the German powers, *at that time*, to interfere by force in the affairs of France. The fact is, and the advocates for these princes are welcome to the whole

benefit of it, that the determination was provisional, and left intirely to the accession of the King of Great Britain. They not only thought that an honest neutrality on our parts would be fatal to such a purpose, but that without our active co-operation the enterprise itself was impracticable. But the coyness of our cabinet, whose first Minister was covering his head with shame for his recent disgrace, deferred the execution of this rash project. In the then feelings of the British nation no man could expect to be heard to the end of his speech who should propose to disturb France in the settlement of her constitution. Before Mr. Pitt could consent to stir a step towards such a measure, it was necessary that it should appear to originate with the country, and not to have been planned in the closet; and that the public opinion should be so distinctly pronounced, as not only to leave him without any immediate fear of losing his place, but to afford him, in every point of view, an exemption from all future responsibility.

These happy circumstances which enabled him to preserve a decent exterior towards France almost without the trouble of professing neutrality, had the further use of helping him to keep back any decisive declarations in parliament, the effect of which might bring the disputes among his

opponents to a point before they were ripe for his full purpose. It was not worth his while, for the sake of a few individuals, however considerable in rank and character, to risque a proceeding which by throwing the whole country at once on the side of Mr. Fox, might on the one hand, diminish considerably the extent of our party differences, and render those which had taken place of no benefit to him, on the other. Our first meeting in February, 1792, must have fully confirmed these impressions. He could not avoid seeing how strongly the publick opinion was against engaging in any such confederacy as that which had been projected at Pillnitz. Domestic affairs, and the interests of our own government, seemed to have a more pressing claim upon us. That same House of Commons which had pledged itself to support the extravagant measure of a war with Russia for the restoration of her conquests upon the Dniester, now unblushingly transferred its applause to the pusillanimous surrender of that object. That same House of Commons, upon the statement of certain corrupt practices at an election for Westminster, committed by a secretary to the treasury, and which looked very like a fraud upon the revenue, refused all enquiry into his conduct. Practices of this nature, not only tolerated but justified on the part

of government, began about this time to provoke a species of censure, novel in its kind, and wholly distinct from that with which they were met by the regular opposition. The writings of Paine had been eagerly circulated. These condemned in the lump the whole system of our government. They held up the theory of it as false, and the practice as pernicious. Little managed as were the terms in which they spoke of monarchy and aristocracy, the object of their chief hostility seemed to be the House of Commons. Just at this moment, and in the plenitude of their popular currency, before the sober understandings of the people could recover from its first impulse, and detect the mischief lurking beneath the false but plausible doctrines contained in these writings, the House of Commons, to screen the imbecility of one minister, and the corruption of another, is made to exhibit in its own conduct an illustration of the worst, and most dangerous of them all. It occurred also to some gentlemen who acted with us, that the conduct of administration was not all we had to complain of. They thought that these practices began materially to affect the credit and character of government itself. They thought that no remedy remained for this growing evil, but by procuring a reform in the representation of the people, and pas-

sing a bill for short parliaments. Sensible at the same time of the mischief, it was their wish to avert the danger, of the new theories, by producing some moderate plan, which limiting and fixing the public opinion, should frustrate all hope of leading men from their first duty, and giving them a taste for desperate experiments upon their constitution. These gentlemen, although certainly without consulting such of the party as they knew to be adverse to the measure, imagined, it is probable, that in bringing it forward under the then circumstances, they gave no grounds for a schism beyond what existed upon former occasions, when it had been discussed. At all events they conceived so much higher of the importance of their own scheme than of the necessity of preserving the union and consistency of the Whig party, that they resolved upon the trial, and prepared every thing to give it its utmost effect.

Under these impressions they determined against any mode of bringing it forward in their capacities as individuals. They associated as a party. They gave themselves a party designation, and entered into party engagements; and in order more thoroughly to obtain the sanction of the country to their proceedings, they gave notice in the month of May, of this year,

of their intention to introduce it early in the ensuing sessions.

If these gentlemen ever imagined that a step so important in its nature could pass by without provoking, from those who had ever resisted what is called the reform of parliament, a most determined opposition, the event soon proved how much they were mistaken. For myself I must acknowledge, that, with the fullest belief in the good intentions of its immediate promoters, I could not see without the deepest regret, the party with which I acted, and which I deemed fully competent in its professions to *every* branch of the public service, diminished by the secession of those who appeared ready in this manner, to sacrifice every thing to their own scheme. But there were others, of infinitely more weight, who in addition to their old objections, were alarmed at the complexion of the times. They argued that the example of France could not be without its consequences upon the minds of Englishmen, that the question of reform must necessarily connect itself in the discussion with the proceedings which had there taken place; that while the question was of a remote, and speculative nature, the agitation of it was comparatively harmless, but brought so near to practice and experiment as it now appeared to be, it grew far more serious, and demanded from those

who disliked it, a degree of resistance proportionate to its probability of success. They saw, under these impressions, great additional aid afforded it by the means of a party embodied for its prosecution, and they knew no better method of defeating it than by concert and combination with its enemies. What they thought right, they soon resolved to make effective. A message from his Majesty to the duke of Portland produced an interview with Mr. Pitt, in which it was agreed to check the mischiefs apprehended, by a proclamation against seditious writings.

It was probably less to suppress these writings than to shew the weight of that influence with which it was determined to resist their effects, that they chose a measure of this general nature which went to nothing more, at that time, than the accidental circumstances of danger with which they thought the question of reform to be connected. Unfortunately however our debates which turned upon so many important points of domestic government, and now began to embrace those of an extended foreign policy, could not be carried on in this adverse manner between the parties who had set them on foot, without engaging to a considerable degree their passions. The society of the Friends of the People complained that this proclamation,

although in terms levelled against the writings of Paine, was in truth and effect, aimed at them. The duke of Portland and his friends recriminated, by urging the circumstances of hostility towards them, and their objects, which had marked the formation of the society. The proclamation, it was alledged, was temporary, and dependent upon the circumstances of danger; whereas the declaration to which the society had pledged itself, held up a permanent object, to be pursued at all hazards, and enforced by every means. Thus originated a train of evils which circumstances soon rendered incurable. The leaders of this society, rejecting all manner of compromise, which in justice to the duke of Portland I must say was offered them, declared their determination to persevere. Those who concurred in the proclamation were equally resolved to follow it up by that system of measures to which it seemed obviously to point. Between the two, the real, solid, unchangeable interests of the Whig cause fell to the ground, and were forgotten for ever.

You see, Sir, that even if the war between France and the German powers had not broke out, which it did about this time, the opinions of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, with respect to France, could no longer have remained the subject of a mere spe-

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culative difference. Every thing began to partake of it. The transactions of that country were become gradually interwoven with all the domestic concerns of our own. There was a French taste, sweet or bitter, in the food we took for our daily nourishment. How could it be otherwise, when Europe all around us was in arms, when it was known that the British court was heart and soul in the confederacy, and that she was only restrained from declaring herself by doubts, which speedily would be done away, with regard to the dispositions of the people at large? Such was the humour in which we reached the end of our first sessions of 1792. It finished just as Mr. Pitt could desire for his individual interests. These every day were gaining fresh life and vigour from the public embarrassments. If he had not succeeded in totally dissolving the Whig union, he had at least effected that which made it as much as we could do to keep together. The breach between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox was widened, not only by the encreasing interest which every man felt in French affairs, but by the new matter which had arisen out of the discussions I have been alluding to, and the new men whom they comprised. To push these dissentions still further, or at least to find out how far they had actually carried us, Mr. Pitt, during the sum-

mer, opened, through the medium of the present chancellor, a sort of negociation for a change in the ministry, with some of the leaders of the old opposition. What were its pretended objects, why it failed, who were purchased by his offers, or who duped by his duplicity, are questions not immediately within my purpose to investigate. Enough is apparent to shew you that he lost nothing by the attempt. Though defeated for the present, and in some respects disgraced, he could always renew it while the French revolution wore an aspect which might be thought menacing to this country, and the Friends of the People pursued the objects of their association. Circumstances might enable him to succeed better another time. Events of great and pressing importance were fast approaching. On the 10th of August the jacobin party at Paris deposed and imprisoned the unhappy Louis. Such an act to a Minister with Mr. Pitt's views, however desirable at some distance, must have come rather too soon. It seemed difficult to put off any longer some declaration of the sentiments of the British court; and yet it was evident, notwithstanding the horrible massacres at the prisons which followed the 10th of August, that a very small proportion of considerable persons in England, and none, absolutely none at

all of the great mass of the people, was disposed to declare war. In this dilemma Mr. Pitt, like all men who play a little game in great emergencies, did the very worst thing that could be done. He recalled Lord Gower from Paris, leaving a pacific declaration towards the provisional executive government established there. To deceive the royalists, he took a step always in modern times regarded as a declaration of war. To deceive the rest of mankind he engaged himself to France through the very executive council which afterwards he refused to recognize, for the maintenance of a strict neutrality. He did that which by being amicable in words and hostile in fact, left him at full liberty to pursue his double game until he could sound the dispositions of parties in England and put the alternative of war, or peace, home to them, before he should answer it himself. Fortunately for his projects this very revolution of the 10th of August was chosen by some vain societies in England for the subject of a vote, and an address of felicitation to the national assembly. New food for alarm! new arguments for supporting the ministry! Meanwhile the eyes of mankind were turned towards the march of the combined forces to Paris. All controversy was suspended; Every interest seemed attached to

the success or failure of that expedition; until the retreat from Champagne, and the victories of the French in the Netherlands, gave a bolder tone to the language of the reforming societies, and brought out into broad day the large views by which many persons in them began to be actuated.

To keep these transactions any longer from pressing forward into our debates, seemed just as little possible as it was to debate them without hostility. With differences of principle comparatively slight, those that began to prevail with respect to the mode, and degree in which Great Britain ought to take part in the affairs of the continent, grew every day more extensive. France had disgusted the world by her cruelties, and alarmed it by her ambition. To temporize with the one, or to bend to the other, entered as little into the views of the great leader of opposition, as it did into those of any set of men his Majesty could have chosen for his advisers. Yet with every sentiment which bespoke resolution in the substance, he felt every possible scruple about the mode; as he foresaw that it was precisely upon this mode that the whole justice of the question would hereafter be found to turn, and that it would be seen whether we had interfered with an intent to restrain her ambition and aggrandizement, or to

change her government and punish her crimes. He thought, therefore, that it was necessary to interfere, he thought that it would be right to arm, but above all things that it was indispensable to negociate. This way, which he professed to be his, of viewing the subject, totally, as you will observe, excluded from the consideration of it all that set of reasons, in favour of war, connected either with our own government or with that of France, which weighed so considerably with other gentlemen. In the opinions of this latter description the destruction, or dismemberment of the republic was the best method of repressing the violence of the reforming societies in Great Britain, and little difficulty remained, with them, as to the mode of declaring war against France, so long as they could secure the co-operation of the other branches of the confederacy.

Here was an opening the minister could not miss. But the blow was to be struck at once, and suddenly. Delay might bring on explanation, and explanation would ruin all. Early therefore in the December of this year he issued a Proclamation calling Parliament together on the 13th, under the pretence of actual plots and insurrections. Steadfastly keeping an eye on our main difference, a speech was framed for his Majesty with a view to the closely inter-

weaving together, and by a solemn public instrument making one cause of, the dangers apprehended from the reforming societies, and the transactions going on in France and upon the continent. This speech and the address upon it was to prepare the ground for a set of measures founded upon these dangers, with which the Duke of Portland and those who thought with him were sure ultimately to fall in. It was to give the Minister this security for his place, namely, that it would be the means of bringing the divisions of our party to a point before he should give any decisive pledge to the public, as to the measures he meant to pursue in that momentous emergency. There was yet some difficulty in settling the language of this speech. If the Minister should declare for war, without first ascertaining what support he was to expect, he risqued his present power. If he should continue *fairly* neutral, he risqued all the expected benefits of our disunion. What therefore he found it safest to determine upon, was a neutrality which should be just enough to save appearances with the public, but which could not in its nature deceive the penetrating eye of Mr. Burke. With the one, he obtained the credit of doing all he could to avoid that war which the other saw with satisfaction must inevitably follow from the conduct he then pur-

sued, unless some very sudden and sensible alteration should take place in it.

To keep him up stoutly to this point seemed the chief aim of that division of our party, which began about this time to announce its separation from us, by some high language in the House of Commons, and by associations and engagements entered into with other persons in the spirit of direct hostility to the old principle of our union. No sacrifice was deemed too great to win from his wary policy any assent, however cold, to the measures they were projecting. Whatever his most vigilant jealousy could exact in the way of full security for his place, all that could be asked as preliminary abdications of the great constitutional points on which they had been at issue with him for so many years, every reproach they had uttered against his integrity and capacity, every claim upon their steadiness that private honour or friendship could urge, all, all was thrown in one undistinguished heap at his feet in this frantic fit of zeal and fury. Now began to display itself the dexterity with which he had conducted this whole intrigue. While in truth he had been courting, and coquetting with them every day since the proclamation against seditious writings had announced their growing loves to the world, by putting them under the

necessity of taking the first open step, it seemed as if they were courting him, and pressing him to precipitate matters with France against his more sober judgment. It was a circumstance, trivial to all appearance but which came very much in aid of his views, that his seat in parliament had become vacant by his acceptance of the Cinque ports. His absence for his re-election left Mr. Burke in possession of the House of Commons during the three first days of the most important period in which parliament had met for a century. Assembling as we did under the impressions which that gentleman's speeches and writings had produced, and which the minister's violent measure of convoking us had sanctioned, a great majority saw with Mr. Burke's eyes, felt with his passions, and followed his cry to arms with an ardour and enthusiasm little inferior to his own. The Minister on his return found the whole business done to his hand; and all of it the work of his enemies. A violent war spirit was raised which he could either quicken or retard just as it should suit his own purpose. On all sides he was safe. His was the past, the present, and the future. Hymns of triumph, and crowns of victory awaited him for his final conquest over the Whigs. The public praised his moderation, and the whole responsibility of the war was thrown upon the shoulders of Mr. Burke and his friends.

Such, Sir, was our meeting on the 13th of December, 1792. In this short but faithful narrative, I have as yet said nothing of my own conduct. The facts are now before you on which you must judge of it. The first head of charge against me relates to the Friends of the People, and through them, connects itself with that of encouraging the other societies whose proceedings have been so justly and generally reprobated. This charge, as against me, is untenable in any one of its parts. It proceeds upon a supposition, that these gentlemen and their society were so highly favoured as to produce a considerable degree of assimilation between them, and the future views of the party, and a consequent departure from its original objects. Names of high authority were whispered about as countenancing this institution, and encouraging its proceedings. Enemies and friends dispersed these rumours. From the one they came in the shape of charge and accusation, enforced by the aid of publications universally disseminated; from the other, in that of self-congratulation and triumph at the acquisition of such support, and by way of encouragement to proselytes. At this time of day it were fighting with a shadow to expose the idleness of these rumours. Even when they were generally current, I thought the only notice they were worth,

was to send you a list of the names of this so terrible club. The sort of denial, however, which I found was expected from me, went to more serious lengths. It was asked why I did not concur in the measures then projected, or in other words, why I did not join the minister, against them? Sir, I shall never repent the not giving you by my versatility, this proof of my attachment to old principles. I can never think the worse of myself for the sort of rusty obstinacy I had contracted from having been out upon your service in all weathers, and which kept me from veering about with every gale which sprung up from Freemason's Tavern. Certainly I disapproved what was doing there; Indeed, at that very time I determined, (nor am I likely to change this resolution) never to become a member of a party in which their influence should preponderate. But was there no keeping to this without joining Mr. Pitt? Or was there, after all, and admitting this society to have had the worst views, any comparison to be made between it, and him, as to their respective powers for working mischief? Was I to forget this minister's early enmity to the marquis of Rockingham, his uniform endeavours to destroy the Whigs, his total disdain of all publick principle, his incapacity for government? Was all to be forgiven him, and the wrongs

he had done the constitution during an administration of nine years, at once to be wiped away, merely because a set of gentlemen had thought proper to bring forward the question of reform at a bad time, and in a new and objectionable shape? I have much respect, and very partial feelings for many individuals of that society: I see nothing very formidable in Mr. Pitt's abilities: But really, Sir, weighing this question as a choice between evils, I could not possibly consent to rate them so high, or him so low. The consolidation of his absolute independent power, seemed to me the worst death the constitution could suffer. I speak as an anti-reformer. In joining Mr. Pitt, independent of all its other evils, there was not even a prospect of security to us for any length of time, from the very same dangers we so much dreaded from other quarters. There was no reciprocity in his treaty. We were asked to give up, for ever, the principle of our opposition to him, on his agreeing to resist the reform for a time determinable at his own pleasure. We were urged to draw a sponge over all the crimes he had perpetrated to come at power and to keep it, because about 20 members of the House of Commons were going to try, in the year 1793, what we had no promise from him that he would not try himself in the year 1794. For this

temporary aid which we did not want, as we were strong enough to defeat the measure whether he acted with us, or not, we were to surrender up all the great purposes for which the Whigs, since the days of Charles the Second, had held up a monarchy of King, Lords, and Commons, as the best of human contrivances to connect liberty with government; and we were to take from his lips, and thenceforward to act upon, the law which in his omnipotence he had pronounced in 1784, upon the true nature, and balance of these powers. To me, the alternative was of no difficulty. It was too much, I thought, to put the honour of the House of Commons, and with that the whole of its value as a controul over factious mobs, and factious ministers, into the hands of a man only known to us by his endeavours to destroy its best functions. It was telling me just nothing, to say that he had thrown off his early confidences, and left the first instruments of his power to their fate, when every action of his life discovered so close an understanding with them. All these lures, thus artfully thrown out to decoy the Whig aristocracy to his side, but ill concealed from me the desperate adventurer who but the other day, as it were, collecting together a promiscuous horde from St. James's and St. Giles's, had

stretched his desolating hand over the fairest portion of our inheritance. I could not consent with Mr. Windham and others, to call in a professed foreign enemy, in hopes of converting him into an auxiliary, and bribing him to defend one half of the constitution by the sacrifice of the other. We knew Mr. Pitt only as an invader. Like his Vandal predecessors, I thought that the exposure of our treasures would tempt his rapacity more than it would gain his friendship. I deprecated these coward capitulations, of lazy, luxurious wealth, this wretched barter of gold for iron, as equally unbecoming our wisdom and our honour. Would to God that Mr. Windham and the gentlemen who followed him had recollected the never varying destiny of those who call in the aid of allies more powerful than themselves. But the bands of reason already were broken asunder. The spirit of strange fancies was abroad. Airy forms of mischief flitted before their eyes at every step they took in this vale of terrors; until harrassed, and hunted into madness by their own shadows, they fell within the magic circle of the sorcerer, where they slumber in the nullity, but not the repose, of death.

You have here the precise degree of my participation in the transactions of the Friends of the People. Of any direct con-

cern in those of other societies, I have never been accused at all. Indeed the whole set of charges brought against me, is of a nature to afford me much consolation. It is surely flattering to have it thus publickly acknowledged by very acute political adversaries, that they have not been able to reproach me with one single act of venality or corruption. Their whole force is strained to make out a connection with a society whose measures had a supposed tendency to encourage bad designs in others. After all their sophisticating scandals, this is the sum total of a charge which was to degrade me from the rank I had won after so many years of service, to turn me adrift upon a treacherous and inhospitable element, and in the eyes of men like you, to sink me into a fellowship of guilt with the drinkers of blood in France, and the rhapsodising mimicks of their crimes in England!

To exculpate myself from tolerating what were nick-named "French principles," and from favouring their progress in Europe by the acquiescence of the British nation, was another ground on which you reckoned upon my support to ministers at the commencement of this session. First I must remark that it is with me, a great proof of the insincerity of these ministers, that in such a fearful crisis instead of doing any one act

which bore the appearance of conciliating the divided sentiments of their country, their chief study was to produce a case to the statement of which no man who had opposed them upon system could assent without dishonouring himself. The footing on which they put this claim of assistance from Mr. Fox and his friends, was one which if acceeded to by him, included the confession that he had so conducted himself as to make it necessary that he should be purged of certain crimes imputed to him by giving some proof, which they suppose he never had given, of his zeal for the constitution, and for the liberties of Europe. Before he could enter into a course of good citizenship, it was necessary that he should begin by acknowledging that he had been a bad citizen all his life. Such claims, from such men, could not be listened to without indignation. They knew it themselves. They had brought them forward to be rejected, and in order to build upon their rejection a set of charges against us, adapted to the popular taste which enjoys calumny, and the popular fears which exult in persecution. But if honour opposed these concessions, reason forbade them. Whatever had been the crimes, or the triumphs of France, the measures of administration were only calculated to encrease and provoke them, and to render

the safety of Europe yet more precarious. I did not support him, because he set out upon a confused principle, unjust as far as it could be understood, and leading to a war which his conduct every day proves to have been unnecessary. I did not support him, because with a party view, he mixed up his schemes on France with contrivances at home in regard to dangers which he, as well as I, knew to be false. This, Sir, was an error, to say no worse of it, in the outset, which admitted of no remedy short of taking the administration entirely out of his hands. In answer therefore to those, who, with a view of introducing by a side wind a charge against me of partiality towards France, accuse me of a slow sense to our danger, I think you will collect, from what I have just stated, that I met my colleagues to the full as much alive to what was real in it as any man of them. What indeed but alarm could our situation both foreign and domestic inspire? France was to be resisted. What were our means? Was it enough that we had a liberal parliament and a loyal people? Was ability, temper, courage, in those who were to preside over the government to count for nothing? Was this precisely the moment in which, exchanging our experience for our hopes, it became wise to speculate that ignorance, imbecil-

lity, and presumption, to work all the good effects of their opposite virtues, required only to be indulged in the full swing of their own discretion, exempt from all check or controul of any kind? Is this a true picture? Who doubts it? Assuredly not they who made these qualities in our cabinet the inducement for their joining it. Sir, that cabinet was every where, and in every way, contemptible. Its character abroad was that of a set of inconsiderate, troublesome, mischief-makers, without capacity to understand the complicated interests of Europe, steadiness to adhere to their engagements, or resolution to execute their objects. At home, what we had predicted of them in the year 1784, and above all, their inadequacy to make government respected, was daily verifying both by their own confessed nullity in the season of such mighty danger, and the absence of all public opinion, expectation, and character from their counsels. This was the cabinet, so acknowledged by all, so described by many even in the honey moments of their virgin vows, which I was to assist in defecating and purging by a course of moral quackery handed up to me from a school of mountebank metaphysics, whose disciples profess to cure the distemper by means of the distemper itself; and who on a scheme of logic well worthy of their other

pretensions, argue that the more you increase its present symptoms the more you provide for its ultimate extirpation. Like those *gratis* practitioners who cry about their poisons under the hackneyed invitation of " no cure, no pay," I was to join in persuading the public to swallow down this trash, as a remedy for all evils, under the ingenious pretence, truly, of affording Ministers a disinterested support. Sir, I had as little inclination, as the country had leisure, for these preposterous refinements. Our situation called for prompt decision, and vigorous action. That there had been great mismanagement somewhere, was a fact admitted. Looking about me to discover in what part our system was defective, my eyes beheld nothing in the main pillars of it that could inspire me with a wish for change. I saw a flourishing commerce, an ample revenue, justice well administered, a people rich, contented, and as adverse as I could wish them to the new experiments of the day. I saw at the same time a ministry generally acknowledged to be incompetent to the preservation of these advantages. Reasoning strait forward, it seemed to me that as we had found out the seat of the disorder, the obvious mode of treatment was to apply our remedies to the morbid part. I concluded that there could be no question between the value of

such a ministry, and the most trifling hazard these advantages could be exposed to by keeping them. It struck me as scarcely admitting a dissenting opinion that this was the time for us to renew, and bring again before the public the substance of those resolutions which the Commons had passed in the year 1784. Nine years had been consumed by the Whig opposition in a state of proscription and disgrace for the part they had borne in those memorable votes. The day of proof was come at last. It was to be found in the actual state of the nation; in the security of its constitution; in the care taken for the preservation of its foreign interests; and in the splendour of its fame. But independent of all arguments from mere consistency, it was my firm persuasion that such an administration alone, as the Commons then contended for, could serve the country; because it was just the moment in which Europe expected from us not only a clear system, but those vigorous demonstrations which never can be made but by a ministry fairly representing the country, and understood to speak its sense. For let us not think we could have deceived Europe, if to deceive her had been our interest, by setting up that administration as the faithful representative of the national will. Foreign cabinets were not so ignorant of the state of our parties,

as not to see that, for a length of years, there had been a systematick exclusion from office of all men, of whatever rank or services, who looked to power through any means except the private favour of a cabal at court; that this system of favouritism with all its attendant instabilities, had at length prevailed over the best practice of our ancestors; and that so far from having to deal with a strong, efficient state council, they had in truth no other security for the national faith pledged to them through such a government, than the word of a court as capricious as any of their own, and the character of a Minister who had betrayed, or bullied, or humbled himself before, almost every one of them in its turn. Very different, according to my apprehension, were the councils which were to give to Great Britain her proper form and station in any confederacy that she might have thought it expedient to accede to for the preservation of the liberties of Europe. Very different was the sort of leader she required to conduct her negociations, to wield her force, and to calm, with the authority of his name, the hostile and discordant elements of such a combination.

It was my opinion therefore, that instead of attempting the chimerical experiment of infusing any portion of wisdom or integrity into that set of ministers, an experiment

which in the first step towards its execution, involved the unequivocal sacrifice of all that we had been contending for in your name, it was our duty to get rid of them by every effort of union and co-operation. It was a case in which the attainment of this great preliminary good, demanded, as I thought, the sacrifice of differences ten thousand times greater than any that had hitherto subsisted among us as members of a party. But if these sentiments were too general to bind the conduct of a wise man in the moment of consternation in which we met, the circumstances under which ministers called us together were such as to leave no choice to those who disdained participating in the most wicked act of delusion that ever was practised upon the credulity of mankind. Need I dwell on the disgusting fables of conspiracies and insurrections,--the fortifying of the tower,--- the contrived delay of all correspondence by the stoppage of the mails, or lay open to you the whole apparatus of political buffoonery as it was played off at one and the same moment on the imaginations of ignorant men? The whole, in my mind, was a wicked, and a most dangerous *trick*; since, whether there existed any real cause for alarm on other grounds, or no, the pretence of a plot when the ministers knew that there was no plot, was sure to create

an alarm of its own, and to engage one part of the kingdom (as too fatally the event has proved) in a conspiracy against the peace, the characters, and in some instances, against the lives of the other. Yet this was at least equalled by another evil with which I thought the country threatened in some warm speeches during this debate. His Majesty, as it is known, had engaged for the observance of a strict neutrality in the affairs of France. Ill as I thought that neutrality either kept, or provided for, any thing appeared better than the principle on which a total departure from it was recommended. There was always a hope, before the sword should be appealed to, that Great Britain by her situation would have been able to meditate a peace for Europe; not a mere suspension of hostilities, but a permanent pacification, which would have sent France back to her ancient limits, and the confederates to their homes; which would have left that country to the settlement of her own laws, and the Princes of Europe to salutary reflections on the impossibility of preventing it. I voted therefore, in compliance with these sentiments, for Mr. Fox's amendment on the first day of this stormy session. I voted afterwards for the motion he offered on the 2d of December to negotiate with France through the medium of an authorised minister.

About this period my communications with several of my constituents led me to think my conduct was not generally approved by them. You pressed me for explanations. I sent you Mr. Fox's letter. This did not content you. How, indeed, could it satisfy men who believed in the facility of "frowning down" mischevious opinions, who thought France would fall an easy conquest, and who were eager to become the punishers of crimes which cried aloud to heaven for vengeance? Do you now see the fallacy of these proud hopes? Do you believe that Ministers have, by their measures, gained the constitution more friends than enemies? or that they can conquer France? or change her government without conquering her? Or in one word, that you have not been made the dupes of your high-spirited sentiments, and of some of the best, as well as the worst passions of human nature? It is my turn to be importunate. I ask you whether every event that has happened since the breaking out of this war abroad, or at home, and every part of the reasoning on which in this its third year you hear ministers justifying its continuance to parliament, does not demonstrate the soundness of those opinions condemned so vehemently in those days of your phrenzy, the profound sagacity, the penetrating view, as well as the unexam-

pled fortitude of him who sacrificed his ambition, his popularity, and hazarded even his fame in their support?

Let us, on this subject, come to a fair explanation. It is not one of the least evils of your situation that you have all been kept in profound ignorance as to what you wished yourselves. Puzzled by your passions, you saw neither the path you were about to quit, nor that which you meant to pursue. Censuring me for my perseverance in opposition, what did you desire? That I should be neutral? By no means: I was to support somebody. But whom? Mr. Burke, or Mr. Pitt?

You are not to imagine that this was a matter of indifference, or capable of an easy decision except in very easy minds. I have already remarked to you that at the commencement of our war system, a most important difference of opinion subsisted between these two persons. Mr. Burke declared openly, and at once, for war, on the broad ground of general policy and necessity. With larger views, a bolder imagination, and far keener feelings, he avowed his object to be no less than the restoration, by force of arms, of the French monarchy, entire, in the family of Bourbon. The sentiments of Mr. Pitt were widely different. During the whole of this period of consternation, while France had settled

herself in the heart of Germany, had seized Savoy, menaced Italy, and was advancing to the gates of Holland by the conquest of the Netherlands, he professed to be actuated by no other views than those of a most rigid neutrality. Far from discovering any danger to Europe from the progress of the French arms, or any insecurity for the British constitution in the establishment of a republic in France, Mr. Pitt never once offered to interfere by remonstrance, mediation, force, in short in any avowed mode whatever, until they had passed an absurd decree about the navigation of the Scheld, and put their red night caps upon the feverish heads of some of our countrymen at Paris; and then his very first step was to negociate, (as he pretends to call his interchange of memorials) with these subverters of monarchy, order, religion, and law, for the express purpose of procuring from *them* satisfactory explanations upon these, and all other matters in dispute. While Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and others, stated their separation from Mr. Fox to have been because, as well upon a principle of right, as upon a balance of inconveniences, he judged the establishment of a republic in France to be a lesser evil than the destruction which he foresaw would involve Europe by an attempt to prevent it, Mr. Pitt, with whom they de-

clared an union, avowedly went in principle to every length of Mr. Fox's proposition, preferring only to conduct his negociations through agents who might be mutually disavowed. I will not accuse these gentlemen of being influenced by any wrong motives; but own myself anxious to make it clear to you, that between systems so very opposite a man of plain manners might honestly doubt which he should take part with, or whether with either. If, for example, I had been convinced by the reasons of Mr. Pitt, or to speak more accurately, by his concessions to his adversaries in debate, that nothing could be so absurd as the idea of going to war to restore the French monarchy, and that the only dispute we had with France related to certain wrongs she had offered us, and to points cognizable by the law of nations, I did not see how it was possible to resist Mr. Fox's proposition to appeal to that law in the regular mode, by discussing, through persons mutually authorised, the allegations of wrong and injury under their different heads. But if I had thought a war right according to the principles on which Mr. Burke and his friends argued it, then it will follow that by giving my whole confidence and support to Mr. Pitt, I should have put it in his power to patch up a peace at his own convenience, and as soon

as he had carried his petty subordinate objects, without touching those larger ones, the importance of which had persuaded me not only of the necessity of the war, but of its wisdom. After bending up my mind to the risque of this perilous encounter, and steeling my heart to all the virtuous sympathies of private life, and to every sense of pity for the wretched race of man, I should have found the purpose for which all this was done but very little advanced; that another, and a yet more important question remained behind; and that I was to say whether to accomodate a minister's schemes, I would not give up that very set of opinions the protection and preservation of which had been the motive to all my sacrifices. Believing with Mr. Burke, that the republic of France must pull down the monarchy of England, and consequently that war was our only hope for safety, with what consistency could I have acted on Mr. Pitt's reasoning which left the republic untouched, or how could I have departed from opinions so dear to me as to render the firmest friendships but lightly valued in comparison with them, and support a war on a footing which involved their disavowal? I saw no escape from this dilemma. According to Mr. Burke, monarchy in Great Britain had not a day to

live after monarchy in France. According to Mr. Pitt, it was in no danger beyond the means which France could exert against it, whether as a monarchy, or as a republic.

You see, Sir, that it was not well possible for men to be more adverse in principle than the members of the new alliance. All the topics which were in use with one branch of it, were in direct contradiction to the professions of the other. But the publick could not follow both. One must give way; and to whose lot this would fall, it was not very difficult to foresee. Mr. Burke and his friends had made no conditions in their surrender to the minister; and he was a man very little likely to grant them advantages to which they were not entitled by their situation. All this they saw, and disregarded. Mr. Pitt, a man with no earthly care about the French monarchy, or any monarchy, offered them but one choice. It was war and himself, or peace and Mr. Fox. Driven to a necessity to them so hard and afflicting, what could they do? War, the result of their judgments, was a bait no little tempting to their passions. Once thoroughly involved in war, they thought the chance of events must bring them together upon some common principle of carrying it on. Pursuing this view, they preferred a compromise

with Mr. Pitt, whose professed opinions, and whose visible interest in the destruction of the Whig party, led him to war, although on a narrow principle, to one with Mr. Fox, who with a view of putting it, if at all necessary, on a broad, national, defensive principle, proposed a measure which might have prevented it altogether.

After the issue of their experiment you will wonder no longer that, instead of appearing before you in sackcloth and ashes for the part I bore in these debates, I take to myself a sort of melancholy pride in the midst of our afflicting reverses. Never, indeed, did that general precept, so much a favourite with Mr. Burke and all wise men, that we must not begin to pull down before we have provided a plan, and materials for building up again, influence me so forcibly as during the whole of these strange proceedings. It taught me how much those members of the Whig association had to answer for, who broke up at once, and without any decent warning, that solemn compact and covenant to which they, and you, and all of us, were equally parties. Heavily will it lie on them to prove that something had crept into the party so radically, and extensively vicious, as to render of no effect all the remedies which could have been applied in the spirit of a moderating, healing compromise

among our leaders. Unless they can do this, they will stand responsible to posterity to a degree the extent of which is only to be measured by those benefits and blessings they professed to transmit to it by means of their union. For what have they gained to counterbalance them? What is the end of all this hasty confidence of their's with regard to the dearest objects of their pursuit. What is the state of France? What the situation of Europe? What the condition of their own country? Painful indeed must be their feelings on a retrospect of the last three years. This improvident surrender to the will of a minister who had neither capacity, nor heart, for the situation in which he was placed, has produced the total failure of the war in all its parts. The loss of the Netherlands and Holland, the extirpation of the wretched remnant of royalists in France, the calamities which afflict, and the disgrace which humbles every part of Europe, all have their causes in this fault committed at the outset, which in some was nothing worse than an egregious blunder, but in others was the result of the grossest duplicity. Instead of laying down a clear system of war, and of alliance after war, such as we have seen pursued tolerably well from the revolution until our own days, they have helped the minister to make, and carry on

a war which both in its principle and its conduct, resembles more an affray of chance medley than a national contest. In this antick garb they have suffered him to send out into the world this child of their old age to mock and disgrace their doating fancies. Such are the principles to which he has restricted the justice and necessity of a war they were so anxious for, principles so opposite to their own, that to provide the means of acting together even from day to day, they are compelled to generalize, and widen their ground, until nothing remains but the jargon about the preservation of civil society, a principle which, as a ground for war, eludes all reasoning, and in whose wide and trackless waste whatever is declared and definite in the objects of either of them, disappears, and is lost even to the speculation.

To resign small differences, and recede from the common pertinacities of opposition in times of danger, is a duty which, generally stated, I will not dispute. To have done so in a yet greater degree at the period we are considering, may possibly be very excusable in many of the instances in which it has occurred. But always, in these cases, the differences we propose to abandon must be such as we are capable of forgetting. They must be not merely such as, in a public view, we

may think ourselves warranted to suspend, but such as we are morally certain can never occur again. If they are to give way at all, it must be to make room for some plan generally good in itself, and applicable to those exigencies which shall have necessitated, by their immediate pressure, the sacrifice, to a certain degree, of our opinions. The opinions thus given up must be of such a nature, as not to involve the persons who sacrifice them in any inconsistency of principle in concerting such a plan with those to whom the sacrifice is offered. This never can be the ease, where the differences have gone fundamentally to principles on which the constitution is built, as well as to those on which government has been administered. Then there can be no prospective view of public advantage in the surrender. It will go to nothing more than an abject acknowledgment that we have been totally mistaken in the principle of our opposition from the beginning. We cannot capitulate; we must yield at discretion. The consequences are, that instead of binding a minister to the terms of a fair compromise, by thus inviting him to dispose of us and our differences just as he likes himself, he will be sure to persist in the very same system of measures which originally made us think that in our opposition to it we had no choice;

that the salvation of the empire depended upon its change. He will pursue this, with the additional mischief of receiving from our suspension of hostilities, the means of carrying it into the most complete effect. This good-humoured condescension is sure, in the first instance, to be fatal to ourselves. It will be worse: it will be fatal to every object we have been in the habits of connecting with our conduct and principles; in every hope of good example; to every rational purpose of unanimity itself. He who is to reap the benefit of our submission, will study very little either our convenience or our honour, and keep barely within the pale of not provoking us to revive those sorts of disputes with him which may tend to weaken his authority. Instead of acting together in a fair, manly concert, the only way by which any junction can be efficacious, our time will be spent in little partial quarrels, and reconcilements, and soothing, and flattery, to keep matters quiet a few days longer. In the mean while the public cause advances nothing; all is left to chance; to the unchecked levity, and delirious presumption of incapacity. The results are visited upon us. Public distress, instead of shrowding, brings out, and exposes to broad day every shade and speck of our private disgrace; until at last we are delivered up, cause,

sentiments, interests, and all, to those whom we have abandoned, and thrown upon the mercy of an injured and offended friendship.

If you will take the trouble to carry these observations with you into the details of our public transactions for two years and more, you will find them correctly to describe the conduct, and possibly to anticipate the fate, of those gentlemen whose example you wished me to follow. They fell into a snare which the sober recollection of past times enabled me to avoid. To my view, the service Mr. Pitt required of them was plain and evident. He took these gentlemen along with him exactly as far as the vehement Tory spirit they shewed suited his purpose of disuniting us, and not one inch further. The war for which they were so anxious he granted them; but in all that regarded either its principle or its management, whether as to concert with the German princes, or as the degree in which the English people were to consider themselves embarked in it, he kept his own counsel, without agreement, or consultation with them, of any kind. In many respects, even his objects were different from theirs. From one it was diametrically opposite; for while the others were pledging themselves deeper and deeper every day not only to the war, but the war system, and cutting off every

possiblity of *their* retreat, this minister, in the ful tempest of his indignation against Jacobins and their adherents, had his eye ever steadily bent towards the way by which *his* could be kept open. Here is in one word, the cause of all that perplexity, contradiction, weakness, and want of system, which has marked the conduct of the coalesced powers. To keep his place at a peace, he has relaxed the sinews of war. To keep his place at a peace, he has unfeelingly sported with the distresses of the unfortunate emigrants. To keep his place at a peace, he has affixed the national stamp to a mass of perplexed unintelligible, hypocritical, and fraudulent declarations with regard to the ground on which the war rests, equally disgraceful to the country holding out such insidious invitations, and destructive of all honest concert with those whom they were intended to conciliate. All this, sir, was mean and little. To be actuated by such paltry predelictions was below the character of a great man. To indulge him in them, was by no means the part to be expected from a wise one. The true friends of the war, by so doing, have destroyed the better half of their purpose. No sooner had they delivered themselves up to him, than they saw that the very first use he made of his power, was to deliver

them up to Mr. Fox. They saw, that to secure his retreat he abandoned them on almost every one of the points on which they had grounded their separation from Mr. Fox: That he conceded the question of a republic in France, with a proviso of its being a *good* republic; of which *goodness* he constituted himself the sole judge, giving them, however, no definite principle by which they might guess at his opinions: That he conceded the question of the personal characters of those who execute government in France. They have heard him concede so much as to be convinced, as every body else is, that whenever he attempts to make peace, he must act on the principles laid down in Mr. Fox's letter to his constituents. "Let him paint an inch thick, to this complexion he must come at last." He must not only negociate with these republicans, which Mr. Burke never would do at all, but negociate in Mr. Fox's manner, by an authorised minister.

You know this too. You have begun to learn it in the loss of sixty millions of your money, and of sixty thousand lives, either of British produce or of British purchase. You might have read it yet more clearly in that train of concession which ran through almost every one of his speeches. For how stands the question? First of all, in contravention to Mr. Burke, he has admitted to Mr.

Fox, *that we need not have gone to war because France willed her present republic.* Next he has admitted, and for this I desire no more than the fact of his having negociated with an unauthorized agent, *that after the catastrophe of the 21st of January, 1793, peace might have been preserved.* Again he has admitted, that peace may *now* be made, France remaining a republic, *and such as she is actually*, provided there be left no other subject of dispute. Lastly, he has acknowledged *that the personal characters of those at the head of affairs, is no bar to the conclusion of a permanent treaty.* The fair result of all these admissions is, that there was nothing in the invasion of the Netherlands, nothing in the decree of fraternity, nothing in the murder of Louis XVI. nothing in the whole series of extravagancies and crimes committed by the Brissots, and the Roberspieres, by the rabble whom they governed, or those by whom they were guillotined, of force sufficient to prevent our receiving both satisfaction, indemnification, and security, for us, and the rest of Europe, provided these persons for the sake, or on the speculation of keeping their power, had only been wise enough to give it us in sufficient quantity. These were the objects publicly held forth to the world, objects so distinct from those of Mr. Burke, that nothing but a private

understanding between the parties, that there should be war at any rate, could have kept up for one moment the semblance of co-operation between them. But Mr. Pitt thought he had done enough for these gentlemen in giving them the war they were so eager for, without shutting himself out from the prospect of making peace whenever the country should grow tired of it; and this he was cunning enough to know was only to be done by declaring war under such reserves and limitations as those which Mr. Fox appeared to extort from him during the debates.

Such were his concessions. Such is the line of separation he marked out, very early in the contest, between himself and his new friends. With his purpose in so doing, all his public declarations most accurately correspond. There are two senses in all of them. As it has been said of him by a very close observer of human nature, *whenever he speaks to you he places a substantive between two adjectives of an opposite meaning*. The war has not made him forget this, his favourite part of speech. Having determined upon it, to gain the seceders from the Whig party, and upon assigning reasons which should enable him to get out of it whenever he liked, it became his policy to perplex and entangle as much as possible, the threads of this mystic skein in which he

held so many of our tender consciences fast bound and locked up. Accordingly he stated, as you may remember, that the points at issue with France were reducible to the three following---to REPARATION for an unprovoked aggression, INDEMNIFICATION for our expences in seeking it, and SECURITY against future attempts. With regard to the two first, there was very little room for introducing into the discussions concerning them any perplexity in the least propitious to his wishes. Even those who carried highest their opinions in favour of the monarchy, never disputed the full practical competency of Roberspierre, or any you will name, to satisfy us. Putting the justice of our claim for a moment out of the question, it must be owned that France had not much to repair, or to indemnify us for, in the month of February 1793, and to whatever extent we since have conceived ourselves entitled to ask for indemnification, the modes of it could equally be settled by the present, or by any set of rulers that France, in her folly, might give herself. If money was to indemnify us, doubtless we should not have scorned to receive, even from the hands of Roberspierre, the gold he had plundered from the church. To the reproaches of Mr. Burke, the minister probably would have answered in the words of a Roman emperor, whose

chancellor of the exchequer was not, it should seem, over delicate in the choice of his ways and means. * If territory was to be the mode, we doubtless should have been as ready then, as I take it we are now, to accept St. Domingo under a treaty with the Convention, as we were to enter Toulon under a capitulation with the French royalists. These two points, therefore, of reparation and indemnification were easily disposed of. The great question was the security. Here was a subject of chicane without end. Here was a field for the display of all those ambidextrous contrivances, of all those tricks and shuffles so easy to the imagination under no restraint from principle. On this it was that he played double during the whole of that session, as he has ever since, alternately resorting to the systems of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, according to the degree in which they bore on that first object of his cares, the preservation of his office and the disjunction of his opponents.

To keep the game entirely within his own hands, he cautiously avoided all explanation of the term "Security," even as he understood it himself. Whenever the war was mentioned incidentally, in the House, he enforced the triple ground on

* *Reprehdenti Tito pecuniam admovit ad nares, sciscitans num odore offenderetur? et illo negante,* ATQUI, *inquit* E LOTIO EST. Suet.

which he had put it by a set of arguments which had an effect, as by him it was intended that they should, far beyond the immediate question he was debating, and which, as well as puzzling the question of Security, gave him the additional advantage of confounding it with that of Indemnity. Declarations to this import were frequently repeated during the first sessions of the war. If no two men understood him the same way, it was enough for his purpose that every friend to the war understood him in his own. It seemed, however, that the further we advanced in the business of this war, the darker and the more slippery became our way. On the 28th of August Lord Hood and Don Juan Langara entered the port of Toulon. They took possession of it, and of the ships at anchor there, under *a treaty* with the inhabitants of the place, to hold them *in trust for Lewis XVII.* whom they acknowledged as *King of the French, under the Constitution of* 1791. As in this treaty not a syllable was said about reparation, indemnification, or security, while the French nation on the other hand was invited to repair to the standard erected at Toulon for the monarchical constitution of 1791, Mr. Pitt found himself under the necessity of counteracting an opinion which then began to prevail, and which was so far

dangerous to his views as it pledged him against any terms with any sort of republic. Accordingly, on the 23d of October, a declaration, or manifesto, is put forth, addressed to all the foreign ministers, and to all commanders of his Majesty's fleets and armies, and more particularly to the French nation. Always ready as I am to pay the profoundest homage to his talents when I see them employed on these exercises of ingenuity, to do them full justice on this occasion can be the work of no hands but his own. To this most extraordinary paper I shall beg a few moments of your attention. Its character is in its matter. It admits of no close description, since it is the index of the mind of him who put it together. In this performance it must be confessed, that no part of his various excellencies is hid by the envious interception of intelligence, or principle of any kind. It seems to have been imagined in the idea of conciliating all parties to the war, by exhibiting, in a piece which should contain a little of every body's, a specimen of that amiable unanimity which prevailed among the ministers themselves. It was contrived to look like a joint effort of cabinet ingenuity, to which every member contributed his separate portion of wisdom, which he took care so to distinguish from his neighbour's

as to be sure of no difficulty in making out his claim to it hereafter. It was an assemblage in which monarchies, republics, war, peace, religion, atheism, dire bloodshed, and halcyon harmony, mingled together in a groupe wholly new and fanciful; forming a sort of *divertissement* somewhat between a Pyrrhick dance and a Scotch reel; a whimsical fairy fandango, which presented in its turn to the eye every variety of shape and attitude; but which, when you approached to join hands with it, vanished into the thin air of which it was composed. With all this, the deception was admirable. Every man looked at it in his own way, and became satisfied with the resemblance he found to his own notions. Nothing was ever hit off in such rare felicity of mischief. He had framed a declaration which, it is true, did not directly disavow Lord Hood: that were to have spoken too plainly in another sense: but although not an actual, it was one that might be understood as a virtual disavowal; or, if that would not do, as tantamount to a virtual disavowal. If there yet remained any persons---still determined, in spite of the constant ambiguity of his language, to trust to his management---who fancied that they could pick out, from the operations of the war, a distinct object which prudential reasons induced him to keep back, and who,

under this impression, had embarked in the cause of monarchy with zeal and spirit, in the belief that in so doing they were committing themselves to his views no further than as he was assisting them in theirs; here they found at once the short and certain end to whatever had appeared clear and hopeful to them in these prospects. The text had been revised afresh. The original doubtful reading was restored. Reparation, Indemnification, and Security, those words of potent spell, regained their credit, somewhat weakened, it must be owned, by the preference recently shewn to that of Monarchy at Toulon. The sentiments of those who agreed to the war in his view of it, but objected to one the professed purpose of which was to settle the disturbances of France, and of those who, like Mr. Burke, deemed nothing else worth contending about, were here blended together, and made to harmonize in a composition impoverished by no œconomy of fraud, confined to no single order of duplicity, but lavishly displaying the whole resources of the art worked up into a master-piece by a master-hand. To the first description of persons he addresses himself in language such as this---" His " Majesty by no means disputes the *Right* " of France to reform its laws. It never " would have been his wish to employ the

" influence of external force with respect " to the particular forms of government to " be established in an independent coun- " try." To these he holds up his two points of indemnity, and security, as standing by themselves; totally disconnected from the question of her government, and rendered important and indispensable *only* on the ground of the progress of the arms of France, and her forcible seizure of the territories of other powers. This view of the subject he sustains by the chain of reasoning we have before had occasion to advert to in considering the nature of his concessions, and which is applicable to no other. But when he speaks to the next set of supporters, a very different language is adopted. Another ingredient must be thrown into the cauldron to bind the charm. The king is then made to " *demand*" from France, " some legitimate and stable government, " founded on the acknowledged principles " of universal justice, and capable of main- " taining with other powers the accustomed " relations of peace and amity." From this government the king would exact " none " other than equitable and moderate con- " ditions; *not such* as the expences, the " risques, and the sacrifices of the war " might justify; but such as his majesty " thinks himself under the indispensable ne- " cessity of requiring with a view to those " considerations," &c. &c. Here the plot

thickens!---indemnity is confounded with security, and security with the question of government, from which before it had been kept distinct. Here the security is made to depend not upon the cession of towns, fortresses, or provinces to any number or extent, which in the other view of the subject might constitute a satisfactory one, but upon the adoption on the part of France of what we, not they, may happen to think a " legitimate" government. Who embarrasses the security with this condition? The king of Great Britain, who had just before declared that he " *by no means disputes* " *with France, the right to reform its* " *laws.*" The king of Great Britain, who can't bear to think of employing " *the in-* " *fluence of external force with respect to* " *the particular forms of government to* " *be established in an independent country.*" This you acknowledge to be inconsistent. I wish it were nothing worse. It might then be neutral in the scale of evil. But what name shall we find for the inconsistency that springs from Will and is accompanied with Power? In any other case, it would be the caprice of an odious despotism. All however was acquiesced in that Mr. Pitt might be enabled to secure himself by talking the language of monarchy to Mr. Burke, and that of money and profit on the royal exchange.

If I had been ever so much disposed to concur in Mr. Burke's general view of the wisdom of a war with France, I certainly should not have carried my complaisance to the minister so far, as to take, in return for all the sacrifices that concurrence would have required, a war upon such terms. If right at all, it was right upon Mr. Burke's principles, which, as well as being the only ones to defend it by, were those which led to the only means that gave a chance for its successful termination. On these principles it should have been declared, not waited for. Least of all should it have been waited for as Mr. Pitt affected to do, daily provoking the formal declaration of it on the part of France, by acts which were in truth and substance, a declaration of it on his own. In all this to be sure there was risque; as where is the situation without it? There was the risque of his place first, in the supposition that the country would not go with him in a war so declared. There was a second risque, in the event itself; since, after declaring war on such a principle, there was no *mode* of a republic with which he could treat. But is it true that we are a country so lost, that we are in a condition so abandoned of virtue and heaven, as to see no resource beyond the existence of a minister, whose only talent is the dexterity with which he avoids the adoption of

any decisive course in the season of public extremity? Sir, these habits may suit little affairs, and the moment of profound peace, in which a country like ours may be said almost to govern itself; but I know of no severer curse it can labour under than the rule of such a minister, who when the storm is up, and danger affronts us on every side, can look to no object firmly, or without glancing aside to his own place. In vain do we share his risques: In vain do we wake and watch, and urge him with every argument, and tempt him with every sacrifice. Weakness and irresolution meet us at every corner; the cause is betrayed; and those who conscientiously support him in it are made the scape-goats of his miserable ambition.

They who reason closely upon the nature of Mr. Pitt's admissions at the outset of this business, will surely see the mistake in which they have suffered their passions to hurry them by jumping in with his conclusions to the justice and necessity of a war. On the principles avowed by Mr. Burke and his friends, it is at least easy to understand by what chain of argument, and through what deductions of expediency, they make it out. They put their objections to Mr. Fox's proposal for negociating with France upon its true ground. They argued, that the sending, or receiving an authorised minister, would

imply a recognition of the French republic; that by such an act we should dispirit, and wholly destroy, the royal cause; that it was unwise, at a moment in which we had been *forced by the principles of France*, into a war with her, to begin the conflict by a measure which would leave her no care for the security of her power at home, whereas by an opposite course she would set out in her foreign contest, with a fierce civil war in the very heart of her territory. In Mr. Burke's view, this doctrine was assuredly correct, and if the reasoning on which it was founded had been followed up to its true point, I am ready to confess that whatever might have been my other objections to the war, those which belonged to the deceitful indistinctness of its principle whould have been entirely done away, and that which was grounded upon the impracticability of recovering the monarchy very much diminished. But how ought this reasoning to have been followed up? By a direct declaration on our parts in favour of the infant monarch; by a national recognition of his title; by connecting that title, and the principles on which it was claimed for him, with those enlarged principles in relation to civil society and social order now foisted into every silly harangue which begs us to trust the minister whether he disposes himself to war for the monarchy,

or to peace with the republic. It should have been followed up, not by cold, occasional exhortations to choose, but by active co-operation to restore, a monarch; and by setting up, and exhibiting under the sanction of the British nation, the descendant of so many kings in an adverse point of view to a republic founded on so many crimes. We ought to have shewn the faithful description of persons yet attached to the monarchy that the nations of Europe interested themselves in their cause for the cause itself; that a sense of their own safety *as connected with the re-establishment of monarchy in France*, had dictated the terms of a general confederacy for its restoration; that all ancient animosities were laid aside, as well as all those views of ambition and aggrandizement among each other which had kept those animosities alive; and that as a proof of their sincerity towards France, and as it were to be a guard over, and a security against, themselves, they had placed at their head a nation long renowned for integrity and plain dealing, itself enjoying a just government by law, under whose preponderating influence all the operations of the war, and all the arrangements to be made for the cure of their miseries, would be directed.

It was by such a declaration alone that our cause as against the government of

France, could derive any effectual aid. The point which, in this whole contest, seems the least to admit of any dispute, is that the co-operation of a royalist force in the interior of France was essential to your other exertions. But without some such declaration as that which I have alluded to, I think you ought not to have claimed that co-operation, and that you could not have obtained it. It has been argued indeed, that ministers would have been very much embarassed by such a step. That the royal cause had many supporters of opposite and adverse ways of thinking; that it was impossible to declare for one set, without offending and alienating the other, and that it was better to act as they did with a view to unite, as well every description of royalists, as all other persons who might wish to withdraw themselves from the tyranny of the convention. Those who offer this apology for ministers are compelled to maintain that they must either have said absolutely nothing at all on the subject of monarchy, or have held out, as they did, all sorts of hopes to all sorts of royalists, since it was only in these two ways that they could secure the object which they thought so wise, of avoiding all distinctness and specification. The first answer I should make to this, would be from the fact of their conduct at Toulon. I

know it is said that Lord Hood pledged this country to nothing there beyond hereditary monarchy. The treaty says the reverse; and that the sort of monarchy then stipulated for was hereditary monarchy, *with certain limitations expressed and specified by a law of their own making.* Of those limitations there were probably many which the good sense of the French nation would have rejected or altered, when they came to the final settlement of their constitution; but it is not in common reason to suppose that they would have given up that in which was to consist the whole difference between the government they were endeavouring to establish, and that which they had just destroyed. Shall it therefore be argued that Lord Hood engaged for nothing but the old monarchy, when by the mere mention of that of 1789 he recognized in the name of his master, who never disavowed him, the legitimacy of it's subversion? admit this to me, which you must, and I must argue that the treaty was valid as between Lord Hood, representing the King of Great Britain, and the Toulonese virtually taken to represent the royalists in France, *quoad* the principle of these limitations; that the sort of royalism in the contemplation of his Majesty's Ministers here was the royalism specified by the first revolution in 1789; and that by autho-

rizing Lord Hood so to do, they acted not only in direct opposition to their own declared principle of avoiding all specification, but acted most unwisely by declaring in favour of that particular specification which was sure of placing an eternal bar between them and any of the old royalists who were then exerting themselves in la Vendée. Unless, however, the "common cause" of the allies was such as the genuine Royalists of France could not honourably co-operate with, I affirm that this affected avoidance of all specification was the worst judged piece of political prudery ever imagined. Ministers were not by any means reduced to a dilemma between these two descriptions of persons; nor was it required of them to make any specification of the nature of that which was hazarded at Toulon. All that they were called upon to do, was to declare for monarchy, and for hereditary monarchy, in the person of Louis XVII. accompanied, undoubtedly, in the view in which I am now considering the subject, with an engagement from the whole confederacy *not to make peace or truce with France until these points should be obtained.* To come to some definite understanding on this subject was absolutely necessary; as much so was it to communicate the decision to the royal party, become ONE as it must have been by a candid

proceeding of the allies, both in, and out of France. Those unhappy men would then have had an opportunity of knowing on what terms they were to act: Whether it would be most adviseable to agree, possibly, to the dismemberment of their country for the sake of living under a monarch in the part which should remain to it, or whether to submit to the revolution, and take their chance for better times.

Could it, for instance, be reasonable to exclude, from *any* project of carrying on this war against France, a party which at the period I speak of is not to be undervalued by counting it at any given number of men, but which then could only be estimated by a description comprising the extent of the territory they occupied, the whole of whose vast population started up in arms at the voice of their chiefs? Some sort of intercourse and concert, all admit, should have been kept up with them. What intercourse? What concert? I answer that which should take for its foundation an honest declaration in favour of monarchy, and which, wisely leaving all its limitations to be settled by Frenchmen alone, should confine itself to proving the sincerity of the confederates by a pledge in the nature of that to which I have alluded.

But this, after all, was a wild and chimerical project. So be it. I promise you

that I shall have nothing to object to the arguments of those who maintain that we never ought to have mixed in these troubles. My only business with the question is in its comparative view with Mr. Pitt's principle; to which I prefer Mr. Burke's all to nothing. For let me put it to your common sense, whether a system could have been pursued more in unison with jacobinism itself, than the whole of that on which the minister has conducted this war? Was there ever a man before him who engaging in a war any part of the object of which was the rescuing a country from the miseries of anarchy, neglected to hold out distinctly to it any sort of inducement founded upon the state of things intended to be set up in lieu of that anarchy? How many royalists has this foolish cunning banished into hopeless inactivity? How many republicans have we roused to the field, who would have been content to smile at the sword and the manifestoes of the Duke of Brunswick? For again let me ask, what sense was there at any time in refusing to treat with the French republic? Assuredly none—if it was for the indulgence of an idle punctilio; but the case is somewhat different when the refusal is put upon the ground of giving heart to those within France with whom the great measures of the war would have been con-

certed by wise ministers. It would have been right to attack France with the weapons peculiar to such a war. For one, I should have speculated for success upon the joint co-operating force of external war, and internal insurrection. In this point of view, I can understand the resistance made to Mr. Fox's motion; because there is certainly some sense in making the refusal to treat a *cause* of war, when you make it also a powerful *instrument* for carrying it on. But to take this line with any hope of success, the most indispensable of all things was good faith, and a perfect intelligence on all points with the people I was to act with. I am not going to descant in common places upon the necessity of good faith; but look to the peculiar species of war in which our fortune has engaged us, and then tell me whether the system pursued by ministers has not been fatal to every one of their objects, chiefly on the grounds of its ill faith? You know to what a degree the old royalists of France detest the constitutionalists of 1789. They have not one sentiment or feeling in common with each other even in the midst of their common distresses. His Majesty's ministers, however, told you that it was a great point with them to get the aid of these two parties against the existing French government; and that therefore it was expe-

dient to carry on an understanding with each. Now let me ask, whether it be possible that where parties have no common object arising from opinion, a third can mediate between them without betraying both? He that puts himself in that situation begins by holding a language to entrap the confidence of each, which instead of using to any of the fair purposes for which it is entrusted to him, he carries to market upon a principle of mere profit and loss, and sells the one to the other, or both to a better bidder, just as a bargain may happen to suit him. All he is anxious to avoid is the giving to either of these parties a particular title to reproach him. Under the cover of this stupid insincerity he huggs himself in the prospect of being able to deal out impartial treachery to all sides. Weak policy, this, as applied to any situation; but contemptible beyond all imagination when applied to our intercourse with the French royalists. Never was plain dealing so necessary: never was honour so little to be separated from wisdom, as in all our transactions with that unfortunate set of men. In common affairs we may sometimes venture to go great lengths, with a view to some act of manifest public benefit, with those whom we may know to be deceiving us. Great nations, hating each other in their hearts, may yet be brought to act to-

gether in a well regulated confederacy. No man is deceived by the language of treaties, much less the courts themselves with which they happen to be negociated. The security of independent European nations, generally speaking, lies in this, that in the present situation of the world, if one Ally fail them, they are, upon the whole, tolerably sure of supplying his place with another. But widely different is the case when you are to form an union with a party in a country against its government. They in France who are to call you friends, trust you with their all. If you are to enter into engagements with such persons they should be solemn, and binding upon you in proportion to the awful magnitude of the trust you undertake. You cannot engage them to run the risque of so perilous a correspondence, in a country where the least of their dangers is the mighty force they will have to contend against, without subjecting yourselves to a moral responsibility far greater than any that I am capable of imagining. What, Sir, should I be able to say to those deluded men who had escaped from imprisonment, torture, famine, and the sword, who, cherishing their loyalty in the midst of a thousand hardships, had consented to crawl about their wretched country in all the bitterness of woe, exposed to every species of anguish that can afflict, or want

that can debase the mind, in the fond hope, taught them by your promise, that we should come to restore them to their honours and estates, when we present to their parched lips the dregs of their cup of sorrow, and bid them swallow down the constitution of 1789? Or what face could I shew to the Royalist of 1789, who, on the plighted faith of the British government, had taken arms against the Convention and helped to pull down its power, when for the reward of his services and his risques, I should deliver him up to be punished as a traitor by the ministers of the old despotism which he had helped to re-establish? I put it to you, Sir, as a zealous well-wisher to the cause of French monarchy, whether the recognition of the Republic on Mr. Fox's principles would not have been ten thousand times more eligible, and even a shorter way to its restoration, than these insidious contrivances to hook in the various parties in France by appearing all things to all men, while in fact we pledged ourselves honestly to nothing.

I am indeed infinitely more inclined to ascribe our failure to this double dealing in ministers, than to any superiority of military prowess, or conduct, in the French armies. There was a moment,—it was in the first campaign, about the period of the surrender of Valenciennes, and the re-cap-

ture of Mayence, followed by the forcing the passage into Alsace by the allies, when the destruction of the republic seemed almost within the reach of men who knew how to make use of their advantages. Royalism then triumphed in La Vendeé,—federalism in Normandy and in Gascony,—insurrection at Toulon, Marseilles, and Lyons,---the frontiers were abandoned or forced---famine was at Paris---fear was every where. This was the decisive moment in which a little sincerity might have given you France. Why was it missed? In two words I will answer---because neither sincerity nor capacity belonged to Administration; because, for purposes of their own, they had put this war on a footing which forbade all honest co-operation between the allies, and those within the territories of France with whom a common object could have been concerted. The reason is to be found in that spirit of faithless indecision between the two schemes of dismemberment and monarchy; schemes for ever floating before their eyes, and tempting them with the prospect of advantages between which they knew not how to choose. They have failed, not for want of the resources common to all ministers, or of the means of persuading the country to support them, not through any impediments thrown in their way by the influence of their

opponents, but through the total absence of that in which true greatness consists, the ability to discern, and the vigour to determine, the preference due to different degrees of political good.

Viewing this question as a royalist, therefore, I confess I can see nothing to justify the sacrifice with which the minister was complimented by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham. To the success of the war that sacrifice, perhaps, has been fatal. Persuaded as these gentlemen had been for a long time before, of the wisdom of a war with France, they would have done well to consider the effect upon the public mind of acceding to principles which, in order to accommodate a minister, gave up the strongest part of their question, and suffered it to go to the country upon the single argument of its necessity; a footing always doubtful, and which Mr. Pitt, as slippery an ally as he is an unfair enemy, rendered less and less tenable for them every day by those concessions I have already enumerated to you. These were my reasons Sir, for preferring, when the war questions began to be agitated, the plain strait forward road pointed out by Mr. Fox in the outset of our difficulties. I thought this the only way to relieve me from the certain inconsistency of voting for war on the principles of Mr. Pitt, or of speculating towards peace with

any republic, after having consented to act on those of Mr. Burke. It was thus only that I could be spared the toil of chacing through the mysterious vicissitudes of principle which the war assumed every day, any one definite, or intelligible object. Standing at that distance out of the fog, it was plain to me that the contrivers of all these manœuvres were entangling themselves with their own tackle; and that between rash zeal, which promised all, and wary duplicity which was providing for its own safety, the monarchy they both professed so highly to value, as well as all those interests connected with it, would be lost sight of altogether. It was evident that the war would be crippled from the want of heart in those who claimed to be trusted with its conduct. Necessity therefore, must have ranged me on the side of Mr. Fox's proposition even if I had felt no inducement from reason and reflection to join with it. Between Mr. Burke and Mr. Pitt, I was not allowed to choose, although between the objects, and the plans of these two persons, there was every species of difference on which choice could be exercised. Our warm zealots preferred any sort of war, no matter how conducted, to what they thought the hazards of peace. For myself, retaining to the full as much disgust for the cruelties of the French as they

did, and departing in no point from my old Whig opinions respecting the aggrandisement of that nation, I thought the peace ought not to have been broken for the sake of a war professedly of chances. Chance, you will say, decides much in all wars; but to leave as little to chance as possible in what we undertake, I have ever thought to be the peculiar office of prudence. We read of wars well planned and ably conducted, ending, nevertheless, very wide from their original design; but a war begun without an object, a war that was to pick up an object in its way, was reserved for the politics of this enlightened age! A war of this description, among other reflections, is sure to strike an enquiring mind very forcibly with doubts whether it might not have been avoided altogether. You begin to understand this now. You will understand it much better whenever you think seriously of peace.

For what is it that you desire of France? If this question comes too close, I take it you will allow me to answer for you that you would be glad to see in that country a king. This is your fancy: you are at no pains to disguise it. You swallow with credulous avidity all that is told you in the public prints of armies of royalists, and feed fat the ancient grudge you bear this revolution with the hopes of a famine at Paris. You, who perpe-

tually object the instability of all government in France to our proposal for treating with her, wait with an impatience that makes sad work with your argument, for the insurrection which is to produce a king there. With him, or his ministers, or a regent in his name, you are ready to negociate. What? before a second messenger can come to tell you whether another revolution has not sent him back from his throne to his prison? Before you know whether they have *elected* for their king the descendant of a Bourbon, or the spawn of a fishwoman? Oh no! It must be the son, or since he is no more, a brother, of Louis XVI. Then it is not a king you ask of France for the sake of the office of king, but a king with limitation to a particular stock; and if you cannot be indulged in this, the war must go on. But I grant another Bourbon placed on the throne of his ancestors. What next? You can never think of treating with him until you know his ability to keep his engagements. Here is one more remove from precision in your object. What is meant by ability to keep his engagements? Who are to judge of it? Yourselves. By what rule? Not to quarrel with you for a word, I will call it by your discretion. France restores monarchy, we will say, un-

der certain limitations. You don't approve of these limitations, or you think the monarchy not likely to be safe under them. Consistently with your principles therefore, you can make peace with the monarch as little as you can with the present republic. France must submit to you the whole question of her government, both as to form, to persons, and to limitations. The case is full of all manner of embarrassments. What will any monarchy be worth in France unless the emigrants recover their estates? Of the two, a demand to reinstate them would be far the more reasonable and the more just. These were your difficulties from the beginning; they are still the same, and must continue so in the most favourable turn the contest can take. They impose on you the necessity of setting up in France a king of your own, and of supporting him when he is there. I think it clear, upon the face of such terms, that a war to enforce them could not be necessary; wise, honourable, expedient, for the present as much as you please, but that character which is understood by the term *necessary*, that is, *inevitable*, can never belong to it upon any reasoning we have yet heard. It may fairly be thrown on the other side therefore, to support the negative of this proposition, That no political situation in which Great Britain can be

said to have stood in the month of January 1793, made it necessary that the peace should be broken at that moment in order to hunt for a cause of quarrel so large as that which is now explained by the demand of "*a government capable of maintaining with other nations, the accustomed relations of peace and amity.*"

Here, Sir, I must stop for a few moments to notice the flimsy conceit, it deserves no better name, of those who rest the question of *necessity* on the accidental, formal declaration of war first at Paris: to such it is more than enough to answer that the insulting dismission of M. Chauvelin was the substantial declaration of it. In the strictness of public law, the notification to him not to appear at Court was giving France a just *cause of complaint* against us, which, if not settled by negociation, might become a just *cause of war*. But the dismission was an act of positive and final hostility. It was going one step farther than any act of military aggression, on which nations are apt enough to take fire, as it happened to us in a recent dispute with Spain; because, after such an act, intercourse still remains to explain the circumstances; but the dismission of a minister in the midst of a negociation includes both acts, that of aggression in the first place, and the refusal to

explain it in the next. On this ground therefore, they who justify the war can make no impression. They must have recourse to the argument that M. Chauvelin was not a regular minister. Why was he not? They answer, because France had no regular government. I ask no more; for then I say they give up the whole argument of the necessity of the war as far as it depends upon its mere formal declaration at Paris, and must come back to the ground of social order, and so forth, which Mr. Pitt has uniformly disclaimed as having any reference to the *origin* of the war, and which therefore by a necessary and inevitable conclusion, must have been picked up in the course of it.

To return to your demands on France. The same reasoning which goes to the necessity of your fixing for France the principle of her monarchy, should she be disposed to return to it, will apply to the case of a republic, if at last you hear of one with which you incline to beat a parley. The mode in which that republic is constructed, the degree of its dependence on the body of the people, the extent of its powers executive and legislative,---all these great features must regularly pass you in revision if your principle be kept to, of not negociating but with a stable government. You cannot trust France to make

it such. You must do it yourselves. As little can you trust yourselves to a republic of the Champ de Mars, as to a monarchy dug out of the common shores of the fauxbourg St. Marceau. Reserving thus to yourselves to judge what sort of government, and what only, will content you, and investing the ministers with a power to pronounce sentence upon it in your name, the object of the war is not concealed by their prudence, but called to its very existence by their will. Coming from this source, it varies according to that will, and according to every circumstance whether of public import, or of private convenience and interest, by which that will is determined. You give them thus a perpetual negative on all the modes by which France may endeavour to free herself from the calamities of her bad government. Where is the difference between this power of negative *ad infinitum* and the direct positive power of origination? This large discretion I will not now dispute may be fit and wise to lodge in the king's ministers; but where I ask are those great public interests, or that national credit and honour, the risque or the violation of which, places a government under the necessity of resorting to the dire extremity of war?

Every way in which you try the question, it presents you with the same results. Reverse it; and say, to the exclusion of all foreign interference, that you are ready to negociate with France, whenever she has got what you would call a fit and proper government. You must admit a capacity in France to create out of her own materials, this fit and proper government. Admitting this capacity now, you must admit that it existed always: otherwise you will puzzle yourselves with a question yet more difficult to settle than any of which this contest has been so fruitful, and that is,---When did they acquire the capacity? It is in proof against the ministers, that they "*do not dispute the right* "*of France to reform its laws:*" that they never wished to advise his Majesty "*to em-* "*ploy the influence of external force with* "*respect to the particular form of govern-* "*ment to be established in an independent* "*country.*" Thus far agreed, the question occurs—did France ever attempt to exercise this never disputed RIGHT, and to avail herself of this admitted CAPACITY? I answer, she did. France, when in September 1792, she chose the Convention which is now sitting, spoke her will plainly and distinctly; as distinctly, to say nothing more, as you can expect to hear her pronounce it under any invitation of yours.

What follows? You acknowledge her capacity; you never meant, as you say, to dispute her will; why then did this war commence. Under what pretext did you refuse to receive M. Chauvelin as an authorized minister? Under what pretext did you dispute the powers by which he acted? Under what pretext was that act of unprovoked aggression and insult, an act which all writers on the law of nations consider as tantamount to a declaration of war, committed against France, namely, that of ordering M. Chauvelin to quit the kingdom? Was your choice free to act in this manner, or was it not? If you could choose, you was under no necessity, moral or physical, of embarking in the war at the time you did, and consequently it is fair to argue that it might have been avoided altogether.

So much Sir, for the justice, and necessity of the sort of war which Mr. Pitt has provided for us. I have said you would understand better at a peace, why it might have been avoided. I think so, because it is then, and possibly not until then, that you will be made thoroughly sensible of your disgrace. Ministers seem to think indeed, that disgrace like crime, may be diminished by participation; and consequently, by a perverse analogy to a false principle, that they may be acquitted of failing in any one object of their war if they

have but the good fortune to fail in all. I doubt their escaping so easily. Because, whether France shall elect a monarch, or a magistracy, if she does it of herself, if her will prevail over your power, it comes to the same point. Your defeat is plain and legible. You can no more disguise it than the simpleton can hide himself by covering his eyes with his hands. It is at the peace that you will find, that your hostility will have been the pure loss of just so many lives, and so many millions, and all your honour, unless the form of government France shall set up, and which you recognize at last, bear some unequivocal mark of your hand, and of your having produced it by your interposition. Even monarchy, the daily object of your prayers, will help you nothing. In fair truth, where is the difference between a republic of M. Tallien and the Abbé Seyes, and a monarchy coming out of their hands? Call it by what name you please, it is still M. Tallien, and the Abbé Seyes. Formed in utter contempt of you, wanting in all it's parts, the seal of your authority to attest it's genuiness, be the constitution of France monarchy, aristocracy, simple democracy, or a confederation of republics, neither your pride nor your convenience will be considered in the settlement.

Before, however, I dismiss the point of necessity, I feel it incumbent upon me to

state some observations of a more general nature, in which, perhaps, I may have the good fortune to approach considerably nearer to your sentiments. It is asked, had France in January 93, given us no cause for offence or dissatisfaction? Was neutrality the right policy for us to follow while she was seizing province after province, and proclaiming common cause with disaffection and rebellion in all countries? Against this mode of stating the question, I must ever protest. It supposes that we, who contend against the principle on which the war was rested by administration, must have prepared our minds for the entire conquest of Europe by France as a matter of perfect indifference: that we had consented to abandon the ancient foreign system pursued by this country with little exception since the revolution, to limit our views to our own island, and leave the continent to take care of itself. Sir, it will ever form one of my very heaviest grounds of complaint against the administration of that time, and not less so against many of our former associates that, holding as I do, opinions the exact reverse of these, they made it impossible for me to act upon them. With every disposition to curb France, and even to assist them in an endeavour to curb her, I felt that they were determined, for unworthy party purposes, to encumber my as-

sent to the measures necessary for it, with subscriptions to new doctrines, unknown to our fathers, and utterly inconsistent with all sound wisdom, or right principle. They rejected with disdain all offer of support which did not leave the whole of the war, whether with regard to it's object, it's conduct, or it's principle, to their arbitrary caprice. In a spirit of unfair dealing which I did not think was in their natures, Mr. Windham, and others, countenanced a clamour which just then began to be raised against Mr. Fox, as if he had seen with satisfaction the progress of France in the Netherlands, and towards Germany. They countenanced these calumnies, knowing them to be such, knowing from long habits of consultation with him, that his whole foreign system was framed upon a directly opposite view, and from private explanation as well as public avowal, that his sentiments on this point continued unaltered. These gentlemen rejected his support, because it did not go to a war without first separating the principle on which the country was to engage in it, from that contained in the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto. The ministers rejected it because they knew that if the war should stand upon any fair national principle which Mr. Fox could approve, the country would call for him to conduct it. It seemed to be the mutual

wish of these parties to draw a line which should separate him from all that was decent, orderly, and settled in political principle; and to drive him to seek his safety in associating himself and his cause, with the leaders of the English revolutionary societies. Frightened at the proceedings of men who wanted, as they said, nothing but a leader to be in a capacity to pull down King, Lords, and Commons at their pleasure, all was done, in the true character of panick such as theirs, to make them a present of such a leader as Mr. Fox, by passing, as it were, a sentence of outlawry upon him, and shutting him out from all communion with the constitution. If personal provocation could have weighed against a sense of duty, enough in all conscience was offered Mr. Fox, to make him the veriest Jacobin that ever lived. That he did not become so, those friends of his, who, "like the poor Judean, cast a pearl away richer than all their tribe," may thank his honour and consistency rather more than their own judgment or moderation. Suffering with him in the same cause, and guided by his example, I declared then, and am still of opinion, that France by her invasion of Savoy and the Netherlands, did give to Great Britain just grounds for offence: that these just grounds for offence, if not removed by negociation, would give us a

just, and a necessary ground for war. Pursuing this principle as far as it honestly went, I did condemn the minister for not having interfered much earlier. In my view of the subject many occasions had occured for this interference. First, when the convention between the Emperor and the King of Prussia at Pillnitz was notified to the other powers of Europe; secondly, when upon the breaking out of hostilities, France threatened an invasion of the Austrian Netherlands; again, when in June, 1792, France directly applied to Great Britain for her good offices; and again, when the victory of Jemappe had cleared her frontiers, and put the Austrians out of condition to renew offensive operations. I thought it highly criminal in the minister not to have spoken out, at each of these periods, in a language dictated by the spirit of a sincere, but efficient neutrality, as well to France as to the confederates. This it was his duty to have done, even though his dear place were the forfeit, instead of playing off the petty artillery of intrigues at home to set old friends at variance, and to conciliate through the fears of some of us a support he never could win from our approbation. To every part of that ancient system of our foreign policy which was established by the just and necessary wars of King William and Queen Anne, and

which went to establish a balance of power against France, and to erect the Austrian Netherlands into a barrier for Holland and that side of Germany, I conceived myself tothe full as much pledged as ever. But was this the minister's way of thinking? What are his pretensions to be thought the defender of the liberties of Europe when endangered by France? If report speaks true, when the invasion of the Austrian Netherlands was determined upon, Mr. Pitt caused a communication to be made to the French ministry that they were welcome to the whole of them provided they would agree not to touch Holland. This fact he has never denied, although stated in his presence in parliament more than once. Again, when the King of Sardinia, upon the invasion of Savoy, called upon him to fulfill the treaty of Worms, going out of his way as it should seem to be distinct, he flatly and positively refused it.

Under this explanation Sir, the neutrality recommended by Mr. Fox claims to be interpreted; a neutrality, the very opposite to that which was followed, as his, the result of resolution, would have been accompanied by armament, and Mr. Pitt's, the offspring of indecision, was supine and pusillanimous. Under this explanation, coupled with the admitted capacity, and right, of France to reform or to spoil

her government, I demand judgment of the question at issue, and call upon you to pronounce which kept the nearest to our ancient system of defensive foreign policy, they who contended for the armed interference of Great Britain when the Netherlands were menaced, or Mr. Pitt who gave them up to the sword, or the fraternity of France, under the single restriction of her abstaining from an attack on Holland? You augured however, much mischief from the recognition of the republic, and much relaxation in the vigour of the royalist's exertions. First, I am entitled to ask, how did your minister second those exertions when they were made? Secondly, I have a right to argue from what we have seen, that the diminution of energy on the part of the royalists, confined to one corner, would have been more than compensated by the universal diminution of energy on that of the republicans throughout the whole, of France. It is plain that you have lost more than you have gained, by making the subject of government any part of your dispute. But is it true that by temporising with France, you would have destroyed the spirit of your cause? Could Europe never have recovered her heart, if you had once condescended to parley with this republic in the regular diplomatique form? If to recognize a title we think bad in a government, be, in reality, to destroy that

which we think good, what shall we say to King William, who recognized the title of Philip the Vth. to the throne of Spain, at the very moment he was preparing for the war of the succession? What happened from this? Did the Duke of Marlborough feel it's effects at Blenheim? Did he feel it at Ramillies? Or when he was at the gates of Lisle? Or when he had cleared his way to the gates of Paris? Or was it until the ignominious peace of Utrecht, negociated under other auspices, that the *title* of Philip the Vth became of any value to him in the eyes of Europe against his opponent?

I know this is no case of precedent: perhaps there are none in politics. But it will not follow from hence that no use can be made of the wisdom of our ancestors. I would have recognized the republic of France in the spirit in which Philip the Vth was recognized by the best and wisest of our Kings, that is, (and not as sophistry may object, with a design of going to war with her as soon as we were ready) under the pressure of a case which made it expedient, and with the intent of reducing the quarrel, if quarrel we must, to the safest point for us to take issue upon. In the case before us, the formal recognition was nothing, the substantial recognition was every thing; and the merits of that must have depended not upon receiving, or

sending a regular minister, but upon the terms agreed upon with that minister. After having gone so far, I do not scruple to declare for myself, that if France had determined to retain her conquests, even Savoy, my vote should have gone for the war. To some indemnification I think she was entitled by the unprovoked aggression of the allied powers; but that should have been in money, and not in the cession of so material a barrier as Savoy. You would have gained by this way of proceeding, a fixed object. You would have gained the plea of justice and necessity in the prosecution of that object. You would have been gainers on the side of enthusiasm within France. Here, you would have been gainers on that of unanimity to support the war, and vigour to conduct it. All these weapons you have blunted or thrown aside. You have raised in France "an armed nation" against you. The confusion in your objects, as Mr. Pitt has stated them, and which probably has contributed as much as any other cause to the marked disunion among the confederates, when examined with regard to it's operation in France exceeds all calculation. Hope and fear, those strongest inducements of the human mind, are in the ranks against you. By pledging yourselves to nothing distinct, you have disarmed every party in France of it's prospect to save, or

to better itself by change. By setting no limit to your demands, you have put every man upon his defence; you have exalted terror into despair. You have done this for no purpose but to keep present power, and to secure future indemnity, to a minister, who is as false to you as he has been unfaithful to them. Already has he begun to measure back his steps. Already are you prepared to see him negociate with the present rulers in France in "*a cafe of extreme necessity.*" What he means by this no man can tell. He does not know himself. What in his judgment is a case of extreme necessity, the accidents of the times may produce every day. It is any thing that embarrasses his administration. He may give you a peace with France to enable him to make war with Ireland.

Your means therefore of reducing France to a condition in which she will be glad to coincide with any of your objects, have entirely failed, as far as these could derive assistance from within. You have so demeaned yourselves as to become suspected and odious to all parties there. It remains to be seen whether you can compleat the work you have so pitifully begun, by means of any foreign force which the remainder of Europe can supply. For one so full of hope, I think you are singularly circumstanced. Your vigour, that is your phrenzy,

rises with your disasters. There is something truly frightful in the last struggles of your pride. In a fourth campaign against France, with exhausted forces, with Holland against you, the Austrian Netherlands gone, a great part of Germany in the possession of your enemy, with scarcely the means of opposing her a month together in Italy, Prussia changed sides, Spain as good as neuter if you are yet so fortunate, the Mediterranean and the West Indies calling out to you for all your care to make head on the defensive, the war in La Vendeé finished, you are now undertaking to do that which yourselves condemned, as vain and impracticable, when the whole of this picture was reversed. If any certain principle be to be found in the conduct of your ministers, or in their official documents, or in their parliamentary declarations, it is, that without the assistance of some active, and acting principle of discontent in the interior, the whole experiment was idle. There was an end both of all power to shake their government, and all pretence for trying it. It was with arguments drawn from this source, that ministers and their friends replied to Mr. Fox whenever he reasoned upon the absurdity of attempting the conquest of France. I believe them. They did not expect to conquer France; neither had they the foresight to see that

except by her conquest, all other chance *they* had of destroying her government was vain. They are welcome to this concession. How will it serve them? Why truly it will enable them to say, we disowned this intention at first, we reprobated the scheme as the climax of folly and absurdity, but now that no other choice is left us between that and negociation, with our eyes open to all that is described to us as the state of Europe, with no army to carry into effect any chain of operations, with no means of coming into contact with France except by the infringement of neutralities certain to be the causes of more wars, with a starving, discontented people and an incapable ministry, we will now for the first time try the experiment, not of conquering France only, but of conquering Prussia, Holland, the Netherlands, all the neutral part of Germany which lies between the Austrian territories and France, and all that which is in her possession. I understand the fallacy, frequently, of what in logick is called a dilemma; but this is a dilemma of fact. The ministers have no escape. They must now avow either that they carry on the war, or to speak correctly, that they continue in a state of war, to see what chance may bring them, or that they have seriously begun to think about conquering France. They can take no one

military step without some view to this object, if the war goes on upon the continent. Upon the ocean it is a war of piracy.

It were making a cruel use of your patience to combat this folly with serious argument. Believe me it is not to discuss with you the means of effecting this conquest that I wish you shortly to advert to the present state of Europe. Very different are the reasons which render that state so highly interesting. The question is no longer whether we shall *give* law to France, or whether, failing in the attempt, the members of the confederacy shall retire each quietly to his home to repair his fortune, just as if nothing had happened; but whether by our obstinacy we are not creating and raising up a power of a new description, from which we must *receive* the law for years to come?

Amidst the general convulsions that have shaken to their centre those regular governments which took the lead in the measures to coerce France, there subsists, fortunately for some part of Europe, a strength hitherto untouched, and which is daily augmenting under the faults and follies of the rest. The Swiss republics, Sweden, Denmark, and some of the states of Italy considerable from their local importance, have wisely kept aloof from this contest, and rest upon their arms, not ingloriously, but with the

full means of securing respect to their neutrality. Every one of these powers, which it is well worth remarking, are either pure aristocracies, or under the guidance of the aristocratic principle, we have exasperated in their turns by bullying manifestoes, which when it came to the point, we meanly and pusillanimously retracted. A sense of their own security will not suffer them to be unconcerned spectators of our losses. So long as they have reason to think us actuated by the same sentiments and counsels which inspired those manifestoes, they will see that their safety consists in keeping down the power of Great Britain: and to do this effectually, all they will require is some continental power of sufficient consideration and force to act as their head, and give consistency to their confederacy. That power has already stepped forth. Prussia has made her peace with the republic of France on the principle which best facilitates a confederacy of those nations which have remained neutral during the war. Prussia, withdrawing herself in good time from the prosecution of a fruitless contest, with her army entire, her resources comparatively but little diminished, offers under the eleventh article of her treaty with France, mediation, and peace to the German principalities on the Rhine, and under the general spirit of that treaty, friendship

and alliance to all those who stand separate from the members of the present coalition.

This treaty of peace, if not counteracted by wise counsels on our side, will extend it's principle wider and wider every day, until a total change is effected in the politics of Europe. First, let us consider it's immediate consequence. It is here very current that immediately after the signature of the preliminaries, a peremptory order was sent to the British head quarters to evacuate the territories of his Prussian Majesty. Are we in a condition to dispute the point with him? If we are, it must be by force of arms; but if not, what military operation can take place against France on the side where, from every motive of our ancient policy, we should be chiefly anxious to make an impression? Can we cross the Rhine? Could we form the siege of Maestricht? Is there any entrance into Holland, or the Netherlands without passing his door? I do not know that towards the Upper Rhine, our prospect is much better. All the Emperor can do, perhaps, will be to keep Mentz. If he wishes to make that fortress a point for military operation against France, admitting that Prussia would allow this, he must establish in it the whole of his magazines, and assemble there all the force he may want for his

expeditions. But when he has got them there, what is the use of his position? Unless he can retake Luxemburgh, he cannot attempt on that side the recovery of the Netherlands. All he obtains by it is the means of making predatory incursions into the Palatinate. France is far away! But should he once lose Mentz, to all the purposes of a war he might as well make one upon the Emperor of China. He has not so much as a road into France. Here the Prussian treaty shuts him out. From the hour he loses Mentz, all between him and France is dead neutrality. The eleventh article of the Prussian treaty comes directly in force, the spirit and obvious meaning of which is to make that monarch guarantee of the peace to all those princes of the empire who accept neutrality with France *through his mediation*. His Prussian Majesty, as soon as he begins to act in this character, assumes the right of interfering to stop the march of any troops, or stores through the territories of those princes. The Emperor is checkmate. I shall not fatigue you with discussing the question whether this Emperor, consistently with his late declaration to the diet of Ratisbon, can continue the war as King of Hungary. But let us admit him to be sincere both in that rescript, and in his intention of fulfilling the treaty he has just entered into with

us for his loan. By this last engagement, I will suppose him still a party to the war, and by the first declaration, at peace, as head of the empire, with France. This situation, curious in many respects, will be so in nothing more than in the way in which it bears upon the point we are considering. If, as head of the empire, he makes his peace, it is not the King of Prussia alone who will prevent his coming into contact with France; he excludes himself. The neutrality of the empire binds him with regard to all military operations on the side of Germany, to the full as much as it can bind any one of the lesser princes for whom it is stipulated. If a treaty therefore, should take place for this purpose, the spirit of that article in the Prussian peace which provides for removing the war from the North, will remove it from every other part, of Germany; and if the King of Hungary should retain any desire of coming to close quarters with France, the Emperor of Germany must embark his troops at Trieste under the convoy of a British squadron to join the British forces at Southampton; by which time it is probable that some plan of future operation will be concerted.

The next consideration is that which relates to the possession of Holland by France. I do not yet think it fair to state the rea-

soning which belongs to this question considered in any remote political point of view. The justice of all such speculations must depend upon the event of a peace, and whether Holland shall then be left in her present situation. But the importance of the separate peace which Holland has concluded with France, and of her occupying that counry as a military station, is a subject the most serious, and one that presses home to our immediate regard. From that moment your great continental confederacy was hamstrung. We heard a vast deal, indeed his Majesty's speech condescended to speculate in the same way, concerning the insecurity of this peace to Holland. I thought very much with the ministers. But what made it insecure? Their own conduct, in obstinately rejecting all overtures towards a general peace, and compelling Holland to take her chance for safety in a separate one. Had they been possessed of the least capacity, nay had they seriously looked forward to preserving the remnant of a confederacy against the future ambition of France, they would have begun negociating for themselves, for Holland, for the Emperor, and all the rest of the allies, while those allies were a consolidated body, and while it was yet a matter of doubt whether Pichegru could cross the Waal. The prospect of a *safe* peace for

Europe would at the least have been as promising as it became after the States General had concluded a separate treaty, and as it is now, when other considerable powers are following their example. Waving however, all further remarks on this head, let us view it in it's military relations. Holland in the hands of France gives her the entrance of Germany on the weakest side. From Wezel to Magdebourg there is not a fortification to oppose to her. This was her advantage before the Prussian treaty. What is it since? Between them, these two powers command the whole direct commerce of the North of Germany, and all that is carried on circuitously through that part of Europe with the rest of the world. They possess all the great northern navigable rivers from the Scheld to the Vistula. If you contemplate power in the sources of power, what a view of it is here! Yet even this is but a pigmy representation. While France holds Holland, the whole of your eastern coast is at her mercy. In her hands the station is unhappily such as to out flank your least defensible side, as well as that of Germany. It is not in my plan to present you with the detail of it's naval inconveniences. You will not fail to remark however, that for upwards of a century the naval system of this country has been shaped and measured to the shores of France. You

will find it difficult to establish a naval arsenal in the North of Great Britain time enough to afford you protection in those seas. On the eastern coast, that is from the Foreland to Leith Roads, I learn that it is doubtful whether you can create a harbour for men of war. In the mean while your Baltic trade, the sinews of your marine, is open to your enemy's depredations. All the commerce his Prussian Majesty permits you to carry on with the North of Germany, must pass their doors.

I connect my observations on this part of the subject with the Prussian treaty, because, before that event, France could not derive it's full military advantage from the possession of Holland. It were needless to press any further the effects of that treaty upon the operations of the war. There are considerations, however, behind, of a yet more alarming import. Considering the Prussian treaty upon a larger scale, it strikes me as likely to become the foundation of a new system of national engagements coming in aid of the new system of government and manners with which the world is threatened. In this view it forms a new epoch in the French revolution. But a short time ago, the worst that Europe had to fear, was that the influx of French principles would produce, through a gradual revolution of sentiment, revolutions in all

her governments: but never could it have been credited even by those who confided most in the triumph of the revolution eventually, that by a direct league with one of the most considerable of the regular governments, one half of Europe would be seen confederated to force it's principles upon the other. I think this very likely to be the case, in the present situation of affairs. If the King of Prussia had merely withdrawn himself from the war, nothing further could be said of him than that he acted like a wise Prince. But he has done more. His treaty with France has all the effect of an alliance, and must be so argued to speculate freely upon it's consequences. Now the intent of an alliance is to give effect to some purpose; and either is made in opposition to some present interest among adverse neighbouring powers, or looks forward to the possibility of it. In either case, the contracting parties must necessarily use all the means within their reach to advance the object of their alliance. What are those means on the part of Prussia? Purely military. What are they on the part of France? If we conceive her present state to continue, certainly she has not, among the various means of offensive war against herenemies, any one more important than the propagation of her opinions. I profess myself a great believer in

the efficacy of peace to cure what is chiefly mischievous in those opinions; but that peace, as well as being ably negotiated in point of terms, must be general in point of operation. The separate peace, which has just been negotiated under the eyes of our improvident ministers between Prussia and France, will produce the very reverse: it will arrest the certain progress of these opinions to the grave, and once more bring them back to life and action, by putting that monarch in a situation in which he must depend on them for his support. I look, therefore, for the revival of this revolutionary phrenzy, commonly known by the name of *Jacobinism*, to the king of Prussia, and the situation in which you have put him. He it is who receives it into the bosom of Europe, and provides for it there, full freedom of action, and a permanent residence. His palace is the head quarters of its negotiators and men of business. His academies of its philosophers. Through him, the chief of a government regular beyond dispute, this enthusiastic spirit, snatched from an eternal sleep to which it had been consigned by a suffering world, obtains a direct *formal* channel of communication with other states dreadfully shortening the road to all its objects. Enlisting himself thus in its service, he becomes the centre of a new system. He proclaims himself, for the benefit of France, the great royal factor and

contractor for revolutions. By his rank, power, locality, and above all, by the high degree of favour in which he stands, he forms the main link in the chain that connects her with those European states which have an interest in our humiliation. In one word, the object of the treaty he has just signed, is to place him at the head of the Germanic Empire *as the ally of France;* to give him, as the organ of the new system, a preponderance in all that relates to the government of the old, and through these means to bind up, as it were, indissolubly and for ever, the destinies of the ancient world with that of France, and to bring all its properties and its powers under the influence of her ascending constellation.

For this evil, the greatest practical evil that ever threatened us, there are none but preventive remedies: and there are no means of applying these except through a peace. It is peace alone, the occupations of peace, and the objects to which it leads, which can retard the ripening calamities of an event that opens but too surely the way to this scheme of monstrous confederation. But if you would secure this effect of peace, you must lose no time in making it. The good conduct of centuries to come may be insufficient to cure the delay of one critical month in the present posture of your affairs. A peace, or a sincere experiment for it, begun at the hour am

imparting to you my thoughts, by dissolving the gigantic military fabric which France has erected, might destroy this terrible system in its first germination. What we have to fear, is that the vast irregular exertions which France has made for her defence should settle into a permanent war establishment, greater in a similar proportion, than any that can be kept up by other European governments; and this will infallibly happen if nothing intervene in her civil state, considered relatively to other nations, to divert her from carrying her views forward at the time she concludes a peace. If, therefore, you now go on with the war on the principle of changing, through its operation, the government of France, and if *ever* you come, (as you must at last) to make peace without having changed it, France must for her own sake look forward to the means of sustaining the situation in which her neighbours shall have been forced, tardily and unwillingly, to consent that she should stand. This principle opens the door to her connecting herself by treaties and alliances with those states which may be disposed to come into them, exactly upon the old scheme of the court of Versailles, but with very different means of effecting their purposes. She gets this principle by the general urgency of her situation; she gets the habits of acting upon it every day the war

lasts. Reciprocal danger binds her closer to Prussia. The chain of continuity is kept up between the necessity of her present exertions, and that of settling a plan of permanent policy for foreign affairs, which embraces the question of foreign connections, and the establishments by which these are maintained. All this you would withdraw from the eyes of the people of France by any advance towards a peace, made them in the true spiritof pacification: because it is not untill then that they can begin to think of a constitution; but the moment you set them seriously to work upon it, you give them an interest in all those benefits which are the objects of a constitution. France, for these last three years, has been living upon her principal. Half an age of retrenchment will scarcely, under the cheapest constitution they may fancy, enable her to keep within the income of her industry. But whosoever governs France, and looks but a year before him, will find that towards settling any constitution for her at all, he must call to his aid every one of the advantages of peace: that he must set out upon a plan of contracted expenditure, and of attention to resource, wholly and alike adverse to any system of foreign alliance which requires the support of a large war establishment. This brings us to the point. If that infatuated policy shall continue, which teaches the sovereigns of Europe that their safety depends

on nourishing and keeping alive the anarchy of France, and when the horrors of war shall have ceased by their inability to continue them, on their adopting a system of intrigue and cabal which shall permit no respite to her miseries;—if unfortunately they fall in with the projects of those ministers, who, to console them for their disappointments, shall pour into their ears the balmy counsels of persecution and revenge, and encourage them with the cheering prospects of ruined commerce, of depopulated towns, of neglected agriculture, of returning discord, massacre, famine and desolation, then must we expect that France, never quiet herself, will leave no quiet to her neighbours. If the contrary shall prevail,—if kings at length shall learn, that by augmenting the sum of human happiness they provide for the certain augmentation of their own,—if France be allowed to see, and think, that her recovery is worth trying for, then may the elements once more be hushed, the troubled ocean retire to its bed, and these lowering military confederacies be dissipated for ever.

I do not tell you this will be the certain effect of negotiation, or even of peace. All depends on the time you choose for it. Is this voluntary? the chances are as certainly in your favour as in human calculations any thing can be so. Is it forced upon you? I will answer for no terms from France worth

to a manly mind the difference between them and utter annihilation. Your ministers are putting all to the hazard: I fear that under their management, any termination of our immediate evils will be but the beginning of others ten thousand times more intolerable. I repeat to you, Sir: if peace ever shall be made while the Prussian alliance with France continues in force, and *no change of system or disposition shall have taken place in this country* with regard to French affairs, you have no security for its lasting one hour. It will be a peace engendering wars by generations; and the worst of all wars, as partaking of their common stock. They will be wars not of commerce and territory, but of government and opinion.

I lament to tell you, Sir, that here we talk in a much higher tone. Nothing goes down but war, if our misfortunes are considered with any view to the repairing them. We defy augury and fate. We talk of a triple alliance; of a league, defensive as it is called, between the courts of London, Vienna, and St. Petersburgh, which is to counteract the king of Prussia's treaty with France, to crush his power, and if necessary to parcel out his dominions. According to this speculation nothing is so easy: it is but the work of a campaign. In spite of the confidence with which I hear this promised, I cannot help suspecting our enlightened age to be lamenta-

bly deficient in the art of calculating conquests. By all I can learn, or observe of Prussia, she is likely to prove a bitter morsel to her devouring pursuers. Hitherto we have seen little of Prussia but her politics. Acting with an army against France, in concert with the irreconcileable enemy of her dominion, her military energy has always been veiled under the cloud of a dubious faith. All that we know for certain is, that in the contest from which she has just withdrawn herself, she has suffered in her treasure and her troops in no decent proportion to the other powers. It is generally admitted by those best capable of forming a judgment, that the interior of the Prussian dominions bears less than any other country you can visit the marks of this common calamity. In pecuniary resources she is beyond all comparison richer than either of the continental branches of this triple confederacy. In those which belong to political situation, the advantages are altogether as much on her side. From the House of Austria she has nothing directly to fear. In the present state of Europe the chances of a Silesian war would be rather in her favour. It is on the side of Poland, and chiefly the newly acquired territories, that our great hopes of giving the law to the King of Prussia are supposed to rest.

Whatever may have been the fate of that gallant but unfortunate people, the vigour with which they resisted the last dismemberment of their country has at least proved the extent of public sentiment in Poland, and its value to any considerable neighbouring power which may find an interest in going with that sentiment. The King of Prussia has tried it both ways: First, when in concert with the British Minister, and to set up his own interest in Poland against that of Russia, he settled the new government with the leaders of the revolution in 1791. Secondly, when by the desertion of that minister in a contest in which he had embarked at his instance, he was driven into the arms of Russia, and into a participation of her views. This is the sum of his history with regard to Poland. He has had his share in the plunder of a country which, without his co-operation, never could have been plundered at all. It seems the two Imperial courts are now to deprive him of those acquisitions, and share them amongst themselves. I think they will experience a difficulty in this second transfer not so easily conquered as when they met it in the first. Perhaps the court of Vienna may find itself not altogether at ease on the side of Hungary and the Turkish frontier. But what should hinder the King of Prussia from changing sides in the politics of Poland, and coming

round again to the revolutionists of 1791? What should hinder him, after having secured his own share of the spoil by stipulations which they who remain in Poland would be too wise to refuse complying with, from marching a Prussian and a French army into the heart of the Russian provinces, and with the aid of its inhabitants, wresting the whole of them out of her hands? You talk of extirpating the King of Prussia through Poland. It is on this side the Russian empire is chiefly vulnerable herself; and never, depend upon it, while the wise counsels prevail which have governed that court for so many years, never will any step be taken to disturb the *happy compromise* which extended her dominion last year to the banks of the Vistula. The speculation is extravagant.

The state of our account, therefore, I take to be all to nothing against us. I wish no man so ill as that he should employ himself in examining it with a view either to the conquest of France, or to any change in her will with regard to the sort of government she is to set up. It is to little purpose that Mr. Windham, and others of his way of thinking, have obtained at last some share in the counsels under which the war is managed. They come to a government exhausted by adventurous improvidence, and stand before a people fatigued, discouraged, querulous, and full

charged with the materials of a most frightful discontent. The time was gone by either for honest advice, or vigorous action. Your war had got such an ill name, that no wisdom, no spirit, no honourable pledge of their persons or characters could restore it. I have dwelt the longer upon these matters, and gone the more into details relative to the origin of our misfortunes, from a desire of standing clear with you in those points which relate to the separation of our old friends, as well as from an anxiety, which I cannot help feeling as a matter of taste, that the original ground of their difference with us should not be confounded with those we are now contending with Mr. Pitt. To these I will add a yet stronger motive; for neither shall the character of our party survive its fate, nor can the country look with any hope towards its preservation, unless we determine upon a retrospective inquiry into the conduct of the war, in order to fix the blame of our discomfitures where it is due. It is not for us to be told by a minister, with an easy accommodating levity, "We have tried one scheme and failed; "now let us all be friends, and try an- "other;"—this is not the way to act with dignity or effect. If an effort is to be made for our country, and surely it deserves one, we must know who are willing, and who are able. A great change in your situation is at

hand. With dispositions in government less pacific than ever, possibly you are not very distant from a peace with France. Great as you may suppose the evil, it must come at last. With peace, you must have intercourse; you must be civil to this republic of Jacobins, reared by the hands of Jacobins of the worst order, if disdain and horror will admit of your distinguishing them. You must bethink yourselves of making some provision for this eventful change; for eventful indeed it will be, and whether to our prosperity or to our ruin, must wholly depend upon those who are at the head of affairs in the moment of its arrival. Whence it is to proceed, whether from inability to go on with the war, or from the exhausted patience of the people calling for new measures and new men, I will not pronounce, but some there must be, else there will be nothing left to change except your government. You may now choose, and do not undervalue this great privilege, whether you will begin it yourselves, or wait until it come upon you. Remember it can be done but once; but that it cannot be done at all, unless you place each man in the rank and station proper for him to accomplish the purposes of such a change. If you neglect this, you will be as much in the dark with regard to the circumstances on which it is to operate, as you have been hitherto with regard to the objects for which

all your prosperity has been risqued. Every thing will be thrown back upon that capricious discretion which you vainly fancy yourselves to be fixing and confining by the resolution to adopt any change at all, until at last you will discover that you have consumed by anticipation whatever you had a right to hope for from the frugal and the proper use of this last resource.

Taking it, therefore, for granted as a point of mere dry fact, that one of these days, and not very distantly perhaps, you must make peace with a republic of some sort in France; we shall not differ, I think, in this, that it must be our care to guard our own government from the shock, if any shall be to be feared, of the recognised subversion of monarchy in so extended a portion of the civilised world. Observe, Sir, that if I can by any means consent to admit the possibility of our preservation from the dangers that immediately surround us, I must caution you against setting it down to aught of a temper very common amongst us, and in an equal degree sanguine and indolent, by which men buoy themselves up with ideas of our boundless resources, and other general fancies of the like sort, and about as solid. No step that I take, none that I would advise, is determined upon any such expectation. But you have not yet restored me to the full freedom of despair. Where little is left for hope,

much may remain for duty, which, in these cases, travels on beyond hope, and never fairly leaves us till the last. That duty tells me that we must attempt the adventure in all its ways. I neither promise you that a peace is to be had; nor that, if obtained, it could save us; but I think we ought to try for it; and in recommending it, I have a right to press upon your adoption all that may be necessary to make the experiment successful. Otherwise, with every expectation from peace, and my sincere good wishes for it generally speaking, I am by no means sure that the present minister may not conclude one which will be yet worse than his war. We may consider this point further by-and-by; I mention it for the present to avoid the difficulty with which they would embarrass us, who desire nothing better for themselves than the inertness of despair in good minds. Whatever may be our chance, better or worse, we must try it, and make the best we can of it. Impressed with this feeling, I have bestowed a little more attention than perhaps a wiser man would think it right to waste, upon the means which are left to extricate ourselves. The speculation, it is merely such, leaves me I own very much a prey to fears of all kinds. I am afraid that, to any good purpose, the change, as well as being more sudden, must be far more extensive than we are yet prepared for.

We have been fed too high with provocatives to return with any relish to the plain wholesome food of our ancestors. Calamity has come upon us with too hasty a stride. Some hours should have been snatched from the tomb, and allotted us for meditation and repentance. We retain, I doubt, yet too great a hankering after our old sins to take up new courses, and, by a sincere contrition for the past, deserve to be received once more within the pale of the constitution. I question whether we have time, I cannot trust to our inclination, for any work of permanent prospective good.

If we are to try peace without such dispositions, better were it perhaps to be wholly passive. Whatever is undertaken, I am sure cannot admit of being thwarted in its progress by any intermixture of their opposites. Indeed, I scarcely know what one conciliatory exertion we can dispense with in providing for the complicated objects which are included in my idea of a peace. All the considerations belonging to it are of the highest order in politics. To be any thing less than an evil, peace must be established, or attempted, in a spirit widely different from any that has hitherto seemed to influence the conduct of your ministers. Very serious will be the matter of its terms and formal stipulations; but, viewing a peace with France as connected with our

future situation under it; with the part we must act, and the share which will belong to us under the new system of Europe; with the evil or the good which we may be made to derive from it by wife, or weak counsels; with the alliances we must contract; with the establishment of that sort of plan and system of home administration which may alternately conciliate and repress, according to the dictates of a steady, liberal, and manly policy; with the renewal of a dreaded intercourse, so impossible to avoid if we have peace at all, so essential to our commerce, and through that to the re-establishment of our resources;—viewing it, Sir, in all these relations, it is scarcely possible to fill the mind with conceptions of a more elevated nature than are included in this one word Peace. This will be no naked question of territory, but a great settlement, practically involving in its consequences all those questions which I have ever thought your eagerness for alarm has so imprudently anticipated. It will depend upon the capacity and honesty of those who negotiate it, whether from the signing of its articles any traces of this old world of our's shall remain, or whether a new scheme of things, leading to other customs, other morals, other social connections, the reverse of all our present ones, will not take their date; whether in short the evils too hastily predicted from

attempting to negotiate in an early stage, when your power was whole, will not happen in a later when you carry negotiation into effect with your power destroyed. Such a measure, you will see at once, requires the utmost liberty of action, and for this end the movers in it must be endowed with the largest portion of our confidence. I have great doubts whether your minister is a man equal to this arduous undertaking. I am sure he is not likely, through any suggestion of his own, to consult the necessities of the country, and enter fairly into such measures. I will submit to you my reasons for so thinking, in a few short observations on some of the leading objects just enumerated.

In the first place, I cannot expect from Mr. Pitt, (except in one view which shall speedily be noticed,) any sincere renunciation of the project of destroying the French government. Until this be done, not in words but in fact, not by ministerial professions, but by national engagements, all expectations of peace are idle and illusory. Do not think I mean to charge him with that inveteracy of consistency which would restrain a man who had ventured upon the lofty language towards France which he has used, from being a party to a measure which, coming from him, must be taken as an apology for it. Verily I acquit him of all such unprofitable stubbornness. Neither can I believe

him to flatter himself any longer with the hope of success in the war itself. He can expect as little as you or I, that foreign arms can unmake the republic, or if you will, the Jacobinism of France; or that any individual would long escape the kind vigilance of his next of kin who should hold in sober sadness the ostensible language of his administration. This he must know and feel; but to renounce the project, and recognize his error at the same time, the only way in which he can render repentance beneficial, were an effort of magnanimity only within the compass of men of a tried and steady principle. No good is to be looked for from the renewal of a negotiation similar to that carried on before the rupture with M. Chauvelin. Such a measure would be dishonourable and delusive to both parties. They who are entrusted with this nice business, must begin by renouncing for themselves and their allies, all confederacies for the purpose of imposing a government on France. That question must be set at rest in the first instance, or your negotiation cannot advance a step. You must do this, were it only to tie up your hands from tearing off your bandages in a moment of returning phrenzy, and again setting the fountain of your blood at play. But while you thus bind yourselves, which in your present state would be an advantage to you, you bind France too. Is it

nothing think you, to set this question, in which success and power will assert so large an interest, totally aside in all discussions between you and France? In the hour of your insolence you raised against treating with her, an objection of principle. What should prevent France in the hour of her success, from throwing a similar impediment in the way of accommodation with you? You rejected negotiation with her, because you could not trust her government. Why should not she reject a treaty with you as well for what she cannot, as what she can, trust in yours? Unless you recall those volumes of manifestoes with which you have covered Europe, France cannot trust to your stipulations; but she can trust, if experience be worth any thing, to the general feeling of your government for its seizing the first favourable moment to renew the war. The present minister can give you no security for attending to the adjustment of a point in so many views indispensable. In fact, by separating the question of government from the terms of peace, as a preliminary, he would do precisely what Mr. Fox recommended two months before hostilities commenced; and however sincerely you may conclude him disposed to adopt any measure which secures him in his place, it is not in human credulity, after the conduct you have witnessed two short years ago, to believe that in recog-

nizing the French republic he will be actuated by those considerations, which, both in then, and in every succeeding circumstance of the country, made that a measure of prudence, which is now becoming a measure of hard and afflicting neceſſity.

Depend upon it, Sir, that to this point of recognition, of naked, unqualified, previous recognition, we must eventually arrive "The disgrace, and the necessity of yielding it, grow upon us every day." Instead of making it, as we pretended to do with America, the price of peace, we must, as by that unfortunate war we were compelled, begin by recognition, and discuss the terms by themselves. It is only thus that we can make peace; it is only thus, let me add, that we can make legitimate war; for so long as we refuse to negotiate under the pretence that the republic is something we have a right to give to France, or to withhold from her, or to clog with conditions and compromises, disguise it under what diplomatique subtleties you will, it is the government which is the object of the war, not incidentally as the means of repelling the aggreſſion of an enemy, but directly as the means of gratifying those paſſions which produced it.

Such must be their conduct who look for peace on truly pacific principles. You are not one from whose "uncandid dulness" I have much to fear in making use of this

phrase. You will not suspect that in striving to guard what remains of British empire and constitution from the destructive ignorance of those who take the lead in your councils, my only purpose is to surrender it to a French committee of safety. How you will decide on any question, is what I cannot venture to anticipate; but with regard to this which divides us, I feel that at length the time is come when you will bear to be told that at least you must examine it upon its own merits, and that you must cease to encumber it with the difficulty of fixing any such motives upon those who deprecated the war from its commencement, and forewarned you of its event. You will see, what the tenor of my whole life shall justify against these praters about the constitution, that by urging you to search for peace in the spirit of peace, I mean nothing so little as to recommend to you the example of France at any one period since the revolution; that I ask for no more than a fair, honourable termination of this unavailing contest. Certainly after what has passed, I cannot expect this from Mr. Pitt. Even were he disposed to attempt it, there are many reasons which render it impossible for him to open a negotiation for peace upon any honourable footing, to obtain even tolerable conditions, or to provide any solid security for its preservation.

First, as to the point of honour: I mean of the national honour; for with regard to what is due to his individual character, as far as in great public transactions that can admit of separation from the character of the state under whose authority he acts, he must be left to his own feelings, such as they are. Among the many causes of this war, whether of its origin or its continuance is no matter, Mr. Pitt has uniformly placed in the first rank his fear, or his dislike, or call by what name you will, his objections to the principles on which France pretends to found her Republic. This Republic, or government, or anarchy, whichsoever you please, he has attempted to overturn by force; and he has failed. The attempt, however, was made by him as representing the sentiments of this country, whose honour, notwithstanding every misfortune of the war with America, was delivered safe, whole, and unimpaired into his hands. Is it possible, Sir, that admitting his readiness to crawl in the dust before France after having talked so big on this side of the British channel—is it possible that, as an Englishman, I can consent to see my country submit to that last of degradations—that of retracting all its vain and arrogant pretensions through the very mouth that uttered them? If I pass an insult upon any man in the face of the world,

honour requires that he should compel me to retract it in the same mode and form as that in which it was given. There can be no compromise. He who has received it is at liberty to go no where else for relief but to me. That identical portion of character which I have taken from him, he must tear from mine, and mine only. For me there is as little choice. Poor of spirit indeed is he who speculates upon a middle course. I am not fond, in general, of analogies between cases of individuals, and cases of governments; but in this before us the parallel holds exactly, as it will in all questions of government which go to their legitimacy. To dispute this, is in the very highest order of insult. Now, Sir, without going into abstract considerations of the legitimacy of that of France, I ask, are you in a condition to dispute it with her? But did not Mr. Pitt dispute it with her? and can he now, or under any circumstances, recognize that legitimacy without renouncing for us, as a nation, all those high sentiments through which, appealing to our pride, our honour, and our feelings, he engaged us to deny it, and to support that denial by trying our strength with France upon the very point? This were an abject suing for peace,—this were, indeed, to bow down the head of Britain, and cover it with indecorous dust. All advances towards

France on the part of Mr. Pitt, must necessarily be so many apologies for his arrogance, not in his name, but in your's.

It is not the mere indecency of this which would disgust me. It is a point that goes to essentials; influencing very considerably on the terms of any treaty we might conclude with France; and as vitally connected with our honour, affecting through that our security for every thing else. France, in treating with Mr. Pitt, must naturally take into consideration all the circumstances which create in him a readiness to treat with her. In the first place, she knows his disposition; how far she may trust to the sincerity of his pacificatory professions; how far he is likely to abstain from giving her any disturbance after peace by meddling with her parties and factions. Giving her credit for what degree of moderation you will, you must be sure that France, if she acts wisely, will weigh all these considerations; that she will calculate her risque in the terms of her agreement; that these terms will be higher, or lower, in proportion to what she will have to apprehend from the hostile, or treacherous disposition of the power with whom she negotiates. Believing that he seeks in a peace, nothing but a suspension of hostilities, in order to renew the war at a more favourable moment, she will think it right to secure herself

against the effects of a surprize, by insisting in some instances upon cessions, in others upon renunciations, which to us may appear in the highest degree exorbitant; but which, to speak truth, would be no more so than we, under the same circumstances, should conceive ourselves entitled to ask from her. This, you will say, is putting a very extreme case; and supposing that France will have it in her power to dictate to us what peace she likes. I do not see how your objection is to remove the probability of the fact. If Mr. Pitt continues minister, I most certainly think that it will be so. France has measured his powers, and very much do I doubt whether she has found any thing in them to discourage her most extravagant demands. What countenance, I ask you, can he wear towards France, by whom he has been so beaten into a sense of his incapacity, except that of the most abject humility? In discussing the articles of peace, at what concession, however disgraceful, could he stop? Put the most extravagant case you can think of. He must either concede the terms, or fight to procure better. If he concedes them, there is an end, you will admit, of the question one way; and yet, since the experience France has had of his abilities as a war minister for the two first campaigns and the beginning of the present, with what

hope of intimidating her could he resort to measures of vigour and resolution? What cares France either for his manifestoes, or for his armies, or, notwithstanding British superiority, what cares she even for his navies? Would she understand his determination of renewing the war as a threat, or an invitation?

It is not, therefore, to peace on honourable terms, but to peace on any terms, that we must prepare ourselves to submit, if we leave the present minister to negotiate it. I cannot bear to impart to you all my fears on this subject. I would not put into the heads of our enemies the hundredth part of the concessions I think him disposed to make. It is perfectly true what you suggest with regard to the difficulty both of settling the terms of peace, or providing for its duration, in the present posture of affairs. No man will deny it, but he to whose presumption and self-sufficiency all things are alike easy. The negotiator of such a treaty must bring to it the firmest courage, the most comprehensive genius and sagacity, the most enlarged knowledge of Europe and her interests, added to the most disinterested public spirit that ever were combined in man. Rejecting all imaginary dangers, it will be his to foresee the real ones connected with the establishment of this vast military Republic, and to prevent her, if yet it can be

prevented, from drawing within her circle any very considerable European power, whose accession to her system might overbalance the rest. His will be the task to choose out for the future allies of this country, those who are best calculated to give him the great *desideratum* of a security for the peace he negotiates. His must be those talents for conciliation, that ability to inspire confidence, that temper and vigilance, which must assemble and keep together, ready to be called out at a moment's warning, all that shall be found to remain of the power and resources of Europe; and his the penetration that must discern, and the courage that must determine, the moment beyond which peace cannot be retained with safety. A minister of expedients is no minister for these objects. There is a degree of extent and combination in any rational plan of a peace for Europe under its present circumstances, which no one can even conceive, who is not a statesman upon system. It is because I think Mr. Pitt the very last you can name to me who can provide, or preserve, the securities on which peace must depend, that I object to his making it. For what is our security, and what our chance of independence, while Holland remains in the hands of France? Bad enough, you will say; but still not wholly desperate so long as other considerable states re-

main not subject to her power. If we cannot exactly balance that power, we must do our best towards it, and collecting all the fragments of disjointed Europe, throw them into the opposite scale, to make what weight they can. Confederacies, it is true, just at this hour, are in bad repute; but although confederacies to give France a government against her will, have made but a sorry figure, they may succeed better when directed to better objects, and certainly are not to be rejected from any scheme of opposing some barrier to her universal dominion. But any such confederacy, whether to deserve success, as I may think, or to insure it, as you and every body else will acknowledge, must resemble the present as little as possible, both in its objects and in the principles of its combination. Setting aside all objections which may lead to dispute with respect to the present confederacy against France, and stating the one on which I am speculating, as simply intended to resist her force; and speaking of such, as I always must, as a confederacy in which Great Britain ought to take the lead, I ask how, or with whom it is to be formed, if Mr. Pitt continues to direct your councils? Who believes in his sincerity? What is the opinion of his abilities? I would risque the whole of the argument upon his general estimation in the different courts with which

he has had any dealings. Spain, Austria, Prussia, Sweden, the Porte, Russia, the miserable, betrayed, and ruined Poland, all will tell you within the short space of four years, that he seemed in his foreign politics to have no other object, or occupation than to insult the weak, to bend before the proud, to deceive the confiding, and every where to stir up insurrections and rebellions, embroiling subjects with their sovereigns, and sovereigns with one another. Which of these powers, do you imagine, he will be able to engage in any system that requires stability and a permanent trust? And how by their means, or any of them, will he be able to shew that best and only security for peace, namely, that he is in a condition to maintain it? All, in my apprehension, pronounce him unfit for the large duties we require of a minister, who, after a peace, is to preside over the interests of Europe as connected by wise alliances with our own.

What do I deduce from this? Is it mere calumny, think you, or stated only for the purpose of invidious comparison? If it be calumny, the worst of all calumniators are his colleagues, since it is from them, through their example, and their arguments, that I have chiefly been led to form my general opinion of the transactions of his foreign policy. The truth is, that like all vain men, who have the misfortune to step young, and at once, into high and

efficient offices, he has been obliged to learn his business by experiments. Observation had given him nothing, and he was too proud for counsel. The precarious tenure of his power, founded on no settled principle of public good, representing no mass of public interests, deriving force from the destruction of opinion instead of from opinion itself, was obliged to live by the day, and help itself on by one expedient or another, to the total exclusion of all objects that required time or steadiness for their completion. Himself of no description, the exigencies of his situation have obliged him to have recourse to men of all descriptions. Power of this nature whenever it fails to see its way, which it can very seldom, drives every thing to confusion, from which only it can hope to reap some benefit. Unable to stand alone, as being wholly without resource, it naturally connects itself with its next neighbour, or with the strongest for the time being that may happen to want its cooperation. This principle of present convenience, and no other, guides and influences all its movements. I do not know how better to exemplify what I am stating, if you will enlarge the scale, than by a view of the general politics which seem to influence the court of Berlin. Prussia was a power, under the old system, which the policy that governed it very clearly saw could not

stand alone, and without the support of some of the powers of, what is called, the first order. In the year 1787 the present Sovereign entered, and wisely if wise counsels had prevailed among us, into a close connexion with Great Britain and Holland. In that of 1791 the dispute with Russia broke out. It is well known that in the settlement of that dispute to which Mr. Pitt agreed, the King of Prussia *had no voice;* that on the contrary, he considered himself outraged and betrayed by it. In fact from that moment no alternative was left him, if he wished to keep his rank in Europe, but an alliance either with France, or with his formidable neighbour with whom we had provoked him to quarrel. Why he did not choose the first, which possibly would have been in his situation the wiser, is a wide question into which I will not enter. It is enough that we knew he could not, because we knew of the detestable negotiations going on about this time at Pillnitz, and the degree to which he was a party to them. It follows then, that either he must have stood single in Europe after the desertion of Great Britain, or have adopted the other part of the alternative, which it was also clear he could not do without consenting to participate in the views of Russia with regard to Poland. He did this. A very few months after the settlement of the Oczakoff dispute, *and in*

consequence of that settlement, those engagements were announced between his Prussian Majesty and the Empress, which led, as we have seen, to the plunder and destruction of Poland. In his situation, the King of Prussia had no other choice. To have kept him honest, he should have been kept secure; he should not have been exposed to the temptation of alarm. This was his conduct in 1791, in the politics of the North. When we consider it with regard to France from that period until his peace with her, the same fluctuating inconsistency will be found uniformly to distinguish it. You never could trust him for a month together. At one moment he was denouncing fire and the sword against the spirit of Jacobinism, and negotiating with it the next. Popular opinion attributed all this to his personal character. I own, Sir, that it struck me as more applicable to his political situation; precarious at all times, but rendered yet more so by knowing that among those with whom he was to act in close and intimate concert, and for whom he was to brave very considerable risques, he was to number the British cabinet. Remember, Sir, that I am offering you nothing by way of justification for his conduct. All I mean is to shew you how a Monarch must necessarily act who has to keep together a species of predatory Monarchy formed out of the odds and ends

of Europe, and which can exist no longer than while it is in a state of military activity or preparation. You now see that he has made his peace with France. Between a peace and an alliance with her in his case there can be no difference.

Thinking as I do, that a very near analogy may be traced out between the principle on which the Prussian Monarchy depends, when we consider it relatively to the other great kingdoms of Europe, and that which prevails in Mr. Pitt's administration, I am very apt to think, that if you suffer him to negotiate at all, he will follow that Sovereign's example. Unable to give you the real securities for peace, he will be obliged to substitute those which are false and hollow. Instead of a strong foreign confederacy, he will present you with a French alliance. Now let me ask you, Sir, whether you are prepared for this sort of connection with such a neighbour? For one, I must acknowledge myself not to be so by any means; and beg to put in my claim to the distinction, which I trust to be wide indeed, between a peace which shall leave France to the formation of her own government, and that which involves an engagement of this nature. I shall press the subject no farther for the present, hoping that the little I have said may put you upon your guard against

all endeavours to surprise your assent into such a proposition.

I think therefore, Sir, that the very extensive change which must take place in your whole series of measures before you can obtain the full benefits of a peace, cannot be the work of that minister to whom you owe the war, and its train of misfortunes and disgraces; that he could not attempt negotiation with honour; that were he to conclude any pacification, its terms would be so bad as to necessitate, possibly, the breach of them on our parts; and that in the opposite case, he could provide you no security for its duration on that of France. If there be indeed, any danger that an immediate peace would bring about a revolution with us, it can only arise from a peace negotiated under such auspices, in which either a foundation would be laid for future wars against the government of France, or, for the sake of evading present difficulty, engagements contracted with her leading to an intercourse of politics the most hazardous. I now come to a consideration, perhaps the most serious of any. Granting all obstacles to be for the present overcome, and Mr. Pitt to settle your peace, what is to be his plan of domestic government after peace? If the end of this war be such as to bring our constitution into jeopardy, first, from the contagious influence of French princi-

ples, and secondly, by leaving France with such large means to enforce them, it is clear, that henceforth we must consider our constitution as one and the same thing with our empire. Disposed to think as highly of our constitution as any man, I have always held that the chief part of its excellence, and the whole of its security, depended, as the best of human institutions must, upon the method of administering it. I never was a favourer of those fanciful theories of balanced powers, sometimes mutually aiding, sometimes counteracting each other, but always harmonizing at last. This constitution, highly as we all prize it, can no more support itself by its own mere spirit than any power in mechanics can act of itself. It is hence that very rare endowments are requisite in a minister who aims at so high a trust as that of giving it its impulse, or presiding over its safety. Whatever he may possess of zeal, vigilance, or acuteness, will be useless, if not worse, without a thorough and particular knowledge of the species of mischief he will have to provide against, and resources for repelling it derived from long and settled constitutional habits of action. You would not take a physician, notorious only for his skill in poisons, and for his readiness to give them, in the hope that if you paid him his price he would administer to you nothing but wholesome medicine. It is not by incantations and for-

ceries that the spirit of evil can be cast out. To be a fit guardian and defender of the constitution it is indispensable that they for whom, and in whose name, he acts, should agree with him as to what that constitution is; what is its strength, and where its weakness; what are its beauties, where its defects; and which are its true securities. These he must not only keep in due repair, and readiness for service, but possess the faculty of bringing them into action at once, and thus, on any great emergency, be able to play off the whole resources of the state at the same instant.

Such must be the qualities of your minister. But what is to be the system? Or is government to go on, as it has hitherto, without system, upon mere temporary shifts and expedients? Whatever ministers may wish, they must not expect that much will be left to their option. Look, I entreat you on France; after having given herself a constitution, not on your principles but her own, and maintained at the point of the sword her will to change and alter all things belonging to it according to her fancy, now erected and consolidated into one vast republic. If, when kept at a distance by our fears, and struggling with all the difficulties of her revolution, our danger from her opinions was such as to justify whatever our great men have said and done

to repress them, what hope will be left us when France, cloathed in the double fascination of novelty and victory, comes to demand an intercourse with you on terms of conciliation and commerce? Is it just then that these opinions will lose their danger, and that our constitution may be left to take care of itself? or is it upon a peace that we are to enforce the system of *Tory terrorism* with renovated vigour, and carry into yet wider effect the set of measures which it has originated? If, consistently with a state of peace, we cannot continue our alien act, our traiterous correspondence act, and the rest of the laws and regulations we passed in the same spirit against France, are we, with a view of producing their ends in another way, to search into the sore and tender parts of our constitution, enact new treason laws, and, perhaps, repeal the habeas corpus act altogether? These are measures which, with all the infatuation of the present day, I scarcely should believe in the contemplation of any set of men. Yet your present ministers have no choice; either they must have recourse to some such, or, by doing nothing, confess their whole conduct hitherto to have been rank imposition. If peace with France, or even neutrality, was so dangerous in 1793 that war, with all its hazards, was considered as a safe experiment in comparison; and if, after trying

war, they find the danger from that so much greater, although of another sort, as to drive them back again to peace, to what a degree must not the original dangers of peace be augmented in their minds, when we consider the circumstances under which we shall come to it, and the sort of terms we are likely to obtain? What follows in reason? If the strong measures I have alluded to were right at a period so little flattering to the expectations of France, how infinitely more urgent will be the obligation of acting upon them when the peace shall be settled? There seem to be no modes within the known line of the constitution of protecting it by a temporary suspension of its functions, strong enough for the necessity of their argument.—It must be abrogated at once, in form, and substance.

I am far from carrying to this extent, which must call as you will observe for still severer restraints upon public liberty, the dangers from this republic of France left in quiet possession of so many means of annoying us; but no man will tell me that this mighty change, produced by such mighty efforts, will not oblige us, as a means of keeping our ground, to draw very largely upon the fund of our constitution. Observe, Sir, this is no constrained admission from me of an adverse argument; it is the strong part of my case. Whether the

conclusion of the war shall leave France with a government good or bad, it can never be to us a matter of indifference: if it be good, we must guard against whatever it may possess of real temptation; if bad, against its false pretences and its power, against its fraud and its force. In either case I think it high time to look about us, to muster our whole strength, and examine what we shall have to trust to whenever we come in the face of mankind to a fair trial between the value of their government and our's. Fully satisfied with my own, I wish to give it all advantage in this trial; I wish it to receive no detriment from the wickedness of its ministers, or the discontents of its subjects. These considerations have drawn my attention very much to the quarter in which I apprehend our chief danger to lie. If I venture to expose your weak parts, I shall do it, Sir, with all the freedom of an old friend, to whom it is permitted to offer wholesome correctives, and the common remedies, perhaps with little hope of your adopting them in time, but with as little fear from the sort of reproach which it is so much the fashion to throw out against the motives of such as recommend them.

In the very first and foremost rank, I place a spirit of perfect carelessness among the people themselves, on all matters which regard their pride, honour, safety, liberty, or whatever else you can suppose in a public

point of view dear or valuable to a nation. I think the worse of this, from observing with what inveteracy it is attached to, and woven in with, the scheme of our civil administration in all its branches. I am convinced that in times of danger there will be no safe reliance on this spirit, either for the whole of your constitution, or for any of its parts, even for the monarchy which it seems most to favour. I could know far better how to deal with a stiff, high-flying monarchical spirit, which the experience of our history tells me is to be softened and pared down to the true standard of our constitution, for the sake of what it most loves and venerates. Something is always to be accomplished with the pride of an independent aristocracy. Nor should I tremble to behold a plain, manly, genuine republican sentiment, were it mixed with republican manners and virtues, prevailing among the lower orders. I find no fault with these abstractedly considered; because a wise government will always know what to engraft on such dispositions, and how to turn them to the general benefit. But far different is it with the sad and nameless jumble of all principle we see before us! It is not that ministers are ambitious, parliaments corrupt, the crown holding its prerogative too high;—such are the vices of all ages, never to be cured, but always to be balanced; but we seem in our public morals

to unite every opposite corruption of the extremes of mixed monarchy. The spirit of these times is a spirit of persecuting political bigotry, which exhibits the law upheld by mobs, and slavery enforced by sedition. Is it now, principally, that lofty sentiments of honour ought to be cherished and cultivated almost to a degree of romance; that we should be tenacious in the extreme of privileges originating from that source; that we should give to property even more than its due consideration and weight; that we should display justice in all those energies with which she protects the good and terrifies the bad? The duties corresponding to these maxims shall be set before us in the sublimest precepts of philosophy and reason. In vain!--Comes there a call upon our practice, —find we the least ruggedness in our path to make us toil and stumble, at once we desist from the pursuit. Rich iniquity, turning the weapons of virtue against her own breast, claims and obtains immunity from crime through the fruits of that crime itself: aristocracy, preserving all its insolence and none of its pride, leagues with the court to destroy and quench the vital spark through which it holds a separate existence, the opinion of its independence and of its justice: the court, fixed beyond all precedent in the exercise of those powers which seem rather to belong to arbitrary, than to mixed monarchies, in-

capable of giving any shape or system to its councils, lays itself out to flatter the passions of a debauched and giddy populace; that populace, hating the very name of liberty, degrades and ostracises every man who seeks to guard it upon any permanent principle of action; the ministers, participating in this common nature, than which for the purposes of government nothing can be so fatally feeble, follow at an humble distance the fancy of the day, without ever daring to lead public opinion. This, Sir, is our state. Court, people, ministers, all encourage one another in the perversion of every principle of just government. Think you that this can produce harmony? By no means: never was that happy state intended to arise out of such agreements. Domestic discord, in its direct form, lurks beneath the smile of this treacherous affability. What the habit may turn to, what fungus this rottenness may throw out, baffles all rational conjecture. Great power, under the dominion of great fear, has recourse to strange expedients. If you ask me my opinion, I should tell you, that it would probably end in establishing among us a revolutionary mob government, just as bad as what they have got in France.

Do you remember the riots of Birmingham? I know there are those who express a very high degree of exultation whenever

mention is made of the transactions of those foul days. With some expressions of decent regret, and even this not very often, for the outrages then committed, such as the burning of houses, the pillage and destruction of property and of the labours of science, they think the spirit of what they call loyalty there manifested, fit matter for triumph and congratulation. Could the whole people but be animated with similar zeal, nothing would be to be feared from the progress of French revolutionary maxims; instead of declining, they would provoke the conflict. This is the language; and miserably are they deceived who hold it. Be assured that there is an end of all effective force in the law, and consequently of all certain obedience to it, when it is left to find its own level and balance between the violence of two opposing anarchies. The weakness of government stands revealed, when any class of its citizens, even those who pretend to wish it best, shall be suffered in any case whatever to flatter themselves that, by breaking through the known and fixed fences of justice they may advance its ends, and serve the constitution. Admit the danger, and you go a great way towards weakening the government; but it will begin to verge fast to its dissolution indeed when the impression shall be such among its friends, as that the established authorities are insufficient for its

protection without pressing upon the last spring, and opening the reservoir of public force existing ultimately in the people, and never to be touched but in the last agonies of the state. A mob of affection is just as dangerous as a mob of disaffection. Nor is there after all, any such great difference between the mobs of Birmingham, and the mobs of Paris. The common apology of rashness belongs to neither. Our Englishmen are not so fond of blood indeed; they are content with persecution. But the pretexts, and the purposes of each are exactly the same. Each, for the sake of justice, begins by destroying law. These restraints removed, they are left to pursue their own inclination and bent, which in all mobs, ever was, and ever will be alike. Tired of fighting against each other, they join to indemnify themselves with the common plunder of the state.

Such are not the dispositions out of which I should hope to oppose any thing durable to France in the way of example. An administration founded upon these dispositions, therefore, and encouraging their prevalence, cannot be a fit or proper depositary of the public force. What answer, indeed, can I find to all the plausible part of the French theories, from Mr. Pitt's government considered in its practice? To begin for instance, with hereditary monarchy. The French, and

some English after them, call it an absurdity, because wisdom is not hereditary. I answer, that no English monarch governs by his own wisdom be it ever so great; that if he could, there would be an end of our liberties. It is for this reason that the constitution declares he can "do no wrong;" because he is supposed to act by the advice of his ministers, who not only can do wrong, but who can be made to smart for it. But if selfish persons about the crown, sheltering themselves under this maxim, and taking advantage of a high Tory spirit among the people, and of a disposition to interpret it in a literal, and not a virtual sense, can contrive to vest the chief offices of state in persons of no weight or consideration in the country for talents, integrity, property, or general character of any kind, and persuade the House of Commons to give to all such appointments as often as they may happen, their countenance and good will, then undoubtedly the chief argument which reconciles it to sound wisdom, namely, that the advisers of the crown who are to answer for its acts are themselves most interested in giving good advice, becomes nugatory; then it would indeed be more consonant to reason that a king should govern without any advice; and then I should be compelled to confess, which is the point to which the enemies of monarchy want to bring us through this concatenation of results, that hereditary

monarchy is an absurdity. What can I offer better in favour of aristocracy? I will not ask you what Mr. Pitt has done, but what he has omitted, to degrade its true principle, to vilify the characters of its natural supporters, and in the persons whom he has admitted to a share of its privileges, (with very few exceptions,) to render it in the eyes of the people not only hateful, but ridiculous? again, when the House of Commons is held up to its constituents as an object of contempt, shall I hope to regain to it any portion of respect or attachment by repeating to them the language of Mr. Pitt? Or where, in his practice, shall I find arguments to contravert this detestable maxim, that the House of Commons deserves respect and veneration when acting with the Crown, execration and extinction when acting against it?

All this, Sir, is with me, the foundation of very serious alarms. I am concerned to see the constitution, which remember will be our best weapon of defence against France, in the hands of a man who will not give it its fair chance when opposed to brilliant and seductive, although fallacious schemes, cloathed in all the allurements of new theories, and imposing upon us with the authority of successful experiment. Much indeed has he to learn in the art of government, and much to unlearn of what has been taught him in the school of his youth, before he can attach men

to the constitution through him, and his mode of administering it. When I hear in what manner he describes it, and what he tells us are its obligations, I am indeed alarmed for the duration of its popularity, whether it be offered to the choice of the people of England, or pressed upon their will. I certainly am one, who, considering the circumstances of the times, am ready to take the constitution *as it is*, and who, with the best wishes for its wiser management, consider it not as a thing to be tolerated, but as a thing to be loved; yet when he tells me that it was the constitution which made him minister in 1793, and that to keep him so, the constitution enjoins us to persist in those measures which have marked the last three years of our history with calamity abroad, and nearly with the extinction of our liberties at home; when I am told that to keep him in his place the constitution demands of us to recognize the debasement of the House of Commons, and the proscription of all men who are not ready to bow the knee to his usurped authority, then, I repeat, a fair chance is not given to the constitution in any question which may arise between it, and any possible speculation for its reform. What, in such a contest, are we tempted to hazard, we who believe and know, that this is neither our original charter, nor even so good a thing as a clumsy copy of it? that it is something else

which ministers have fraudulently substituted instead of a constitution, something which operates not as a casual deviation from its letter, but as a radical change in the substance of the contract itself? I think this a great evil: because in a struggle of such momentous import, reasons enough will be found without furnishing a new one, for a cold deadening neutrality, or at best a languid indifference to the event. Many there are who, with an honest attachment to the constitution, will see nothing worth the trouble, and still less the danger of a choice, between the transient prevalence of projecting reformers, and the insolent dominion of a minister;—who will think that neither the one, nor the other, have any claims upon them to stir a step; but that they shall best perform their duty to an establishment they love, and wish to serve, by keeping their strength whole and unbroken, until two mischievous factions, exhausted by mutual animosities, shall present them with an easy victory over both. Is this a thing to be wished? Would it not rather be a symptom of ruin most rapidly coming on indeed, if to any considerable extent a way of thinking were to prevail, which should drive away well-intentioned men from looking at all into the public affairs? Such, however, must infallibly be the consequence of separating whatever is distinct in public principle, from a cause which is to pass under

the name of the constitution. Is it thus armed and accoutred, and under such auspices, that its real defenders can risque an engagement? And were it not the heighth of misconduct in those, who have so dear a charge in their immediate keeping, to venture with half their forces into the field, and link the fortunes of an odious and a powerless name with that of every valuable interest of their country? Can they think it quite safe to send about as a watch-word, the cry of PITT, OR A REVOLUTION?

Certainly it can never be with the effects of such a cry that I should recommend it to you to meet the dangers, whatever they are, to which we may be exposed by a French republic. God forbid we should not have some better standard than this to fly to when that fearful crisis shall come upon us! But the views of Mr. Pitt I must consider as the very reverse. No issue could be so favourable to him and his power. All his measures, therefore, will obviously be directed to bringing our public divisions to this point, and the nature of them will be such as may be best adapted to sustain the cheat of plots and conspiracies, and to feed the expiring embers of our fears. You will only be gainers by this in increased rigours of your government; the whole blame of which is visited upon your constitution, which it makes less dear to those who reason, and

less worth defending to those who do not. It is hence that I have ever considered our former Whig associates to have fallen into the worst of all possible mistakes when they coalesced with Mr. Pitt. For the first time since party has been known among us, and the name of Whig considered as the designation of that party whose way of interpreting the letter of the constitution was most conformable to its spirit, we hear it maintained, which that coalition does, as a principle of duty scarcely to be distinguished from their allegiance itself, that the crown having given its confidence to a particular servant, it does not become them to dispute his precedence. Thus in the preliminaries of their treaty with him they think fit to accede to a principle which vests in Mr. Pitt a perpetual title, and indefeasible right, to his office as a matter of property; to be governed by the rules and practice applicable to cases of property. Thus, shortly and conveniently are got rid of at once all that touches the merits, or that may hereafter affect the permanency, either of the minister, or the measures connected with him. That minister, and those measures incorporating thus with the machine of government, become a part of the constitution as necessary to it as the monarchy itself. To the holders of such maxims no middle course is left. They must take the whole of such a minister, or none of him: but in embarking with him at all,

they must take the consequences of acting in extremes. Then mark, Sir, what a sudden and a frightful change is produced in the entire complexion of your affairs! The public voice is held in check by the imputation of seditious views to all opposition or complaint. Even parliamentary dissent treads close on the heels of disaffection. In this temper it is easy to confound proceedings which originate in mistrust of a minister, with the incipient symptoms of revolt against the sovereign. The alarm is spread at the first movement which menaces that minister. They fly to his defence as to the advanced posts of the constitution itself. If the accidents of the times combine to invest them with a decisive superiority in strength and numbers, after repelling their opponents, they become assailants in their turn. Expecting no quarter they determine to shew none. Then is reared aloft the gloomy standard of proscription and persecution. The British constitution, disrobed of her beneficence, and swathed up in *premunires*, and confiscations, and constructive treasons, is bid to display herself in the sullen majesty of terrors not her own. All choice between the extremities of evil is scornfully rejected from their plan of unconditional subjugation. Rational neutrality becomes suspected. Timid hesitation is punished. The feeble voice of moderation is drowned in the din of a motley host of invaders, each yelling

out in his own barbarous accents, *he that is not for me is againſt me.** They who ſet themſelves to ſtrive againſt this torrent, are accuſed, if not of poſitively participating in the views of certain wild theoriſts, at leaſt of aiding and countenancing them in their avowed deſigns againſt all lawful authority. Who is prepared to ſubmit to theſe pretenſions? Who will bear to be told that he cannot innocently ſeek a medium between the claims of infatuated arrogance, and the menaced deſolation of the change by which it is propoſed to reſiſt them? Yet it is by ſuch pretenſions, enforced by ſuch language and principles, that thoſe who on every conſideration of talents, rank, character and property are the natural and ſtationary enemies of projectors of all kinds, are diſguſted and driven to a diſtance. Men of warm paſſions, liſtening to the ſuggeſtions of a juſt reſentment, throw themſelves into the oppoſite ſcale. An ardent popular ſpirit, nurſed up and encouraged by public diſtreſs, but hitherto without order or connection, by gaining leaders and diſcipline gains all that it wanted to effect the moſt extravagant of its purpoſes. Parties and factions are formed, knowing as little whence they come, as what they aim at. Each, as it were, by inſtinct, finds itſelf embattled in hoſtile and oppoſite array. In this

* Vide the declaration of the Kings of Pruſſia and Hungary, delivered to the Diet at Ratisbon, May 17, 1792.

universal soreness of the public mind CIVIL WAR is only deferred while a conscious inequality of force teaches prudence to the weaker side. But all is prepared. They wait only until the folly of a minister, by swelling the mass of discontent, shall have increased their numbers to a capacity for action. Then, the first mistake in government is the signal.

I leave you to judge whether such is the ministry you would desire to see continued for its own sake? or whether you think it good for any purpose of maintaining the British constitution against reformers, French or English? Indeed the coalition which gave the Duke of Portland to Mr. Pitt, seems to have cut off for ever all hopes of this nature. Say what they will, the members of that coalition meet under impressions of such declared ill opinion, as totally to prevent their answering to you for the accomplishment of any one beneficial purpose by it. This is no common junction of parties the leaders of which consent to forget what might remain of animosity after the first cause of division had subsided. Mr. Windham in 1792—the interval is not too long for his consistency—told us that so far from thinking better of Mr. Pitt, one great motive for his supporting him was because he thought worse of him. Now what must have been Mr. Windham's opinion of the

sense of manly pride, of the political rectitude of a minister to whom in the face of parliament he promises support and the oblivion of all contest about power or place, lest a too great anxiety for the preservation of them should distract his attention, relax his energy, or keep him back from the adoption of those strong but doubtful measures which in the speaker's mind were so essential? Doubtless Mr. Windham will acknowledge that every thing which has happened since that period, justifies the wisdom of that resolution, and confirms the minister's title to his support. But are you prepared to follow up all this strange reasoning to its consequences? The ministry in 1792 was feeble, timid, and improvident. To give it strength and courage, he supported it. In 1794, it grew worse. It shewed itself possessed of no capacity for the conduct, and actuated by no right feeling towards the just object, of the war. To make it better, and bolster it up for a while, Mr. Windham and his friends resolved upon becoming a part of that administration themselves. They hoped, it seems, that although they should be compelled to sacrifice the whole principle on which the Whigs had acted since 1784, they might be able to make such terms with Mr. Pitt as to secure them, though not pre-eminence in power, yet such a degree of strength as would enable them to carry into effect

some of the leading measures of their system. I would ask Mr. Windham with what fidelity Mr. Pitt has executed those terms? and to what degree he has enabled the division of the Whigs who joined him to perform any one of their engagements to the public, or in any one instance, except perhaps in the admiralty department, to better the system they found? These gentlemen may deceive themselves, but I assure you they deceive no one else, if they imagine that their accession to office has wrought any change in the character of Mr. Pitt's administration. They have added indeed something to its numbers: but the great powers of government continue still in the same hands. It is the same unnatural faction that in the year 1784 joined with the Crown, and that very mob it now threatens to hang, draw, and quarter, to pull down the House of Commons.

Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.

These may be very good reasons for Mr. Windham to continue acting with it. He and his friends may not despair of their efforts to serve you; but you, who are to judge of the work, will probably expect, both in shew and substance, something more worth your money than a mere augmentation of personal strength to the worst, and most dangerous minister this country ever saw.

I remember the vast expectations which you, and many other of my worthy friends at **** had formed from that coalition. In particular you thought what was to be done for Ireland was of itself a sufficient justification of that step. Among other taunts it was put to me, what must be thought of my continuance in opposition to a government which offered in their very names so many securities for the public freedom? I agree with you, Sir, that the objection demanded some other answer than the general one, with which however, so many of our rigid examiners are satisfied, that my motives were disinterested because opposition is not the road to power or profit. In my opinion nothing can be more disgraceful than to be seen continually in opposition to government, when it is good. I do not however feel myself so very hard pressed for a reason for keeping aloof from the Duke of Portland's union with Mr. Pitt last year. I must think that whether it be regarded with a view to principle or practice, the inefficacy of any such union as was then proposed, was plain from the beginning.

Unpropitious indeed were the auspices under which it set out. It was but a sad omen of success in their other projects that forming this coalition, as they professed to do, to preserve some very dear opinions, they should have begun it by an act which

destroys the most valuable of them all. If they so much dreaded the prevalence of that insolent mob government which in common with every other distinction has pulled down that of character in France; could there have been a more fatal step than the ranging themselves under the banners of those whose lives have been spent in persuading the people that no such thing as character existed? If the doctrine of equality, as practised in another country, was in truth so terrible to them, how can we account for their acceding to the political pre-eminence of a faction in this, who have so extensively corrupted the sentiments of our own public, and made them converts to doctrines derived from one common source with the purest, most genuine, unadulterated Jacobinism? What therefore, is it less than suicide in men, to defeat whose pretensions to power these heresies have been inculcated among the lower orders, to incorporate and identify themselves with the inventors of them, and under a weak hope of keeping at a distance principles which tend to equalize rank and property, give the sanction of their example to those which subvert from its foundation the only security they possess for rank, property, estimation, or comfort of any kind? I ask, what remains to them when the opinion of their public virtue is no more? I ask, in defiance of the flimsy conceits, and vain

metaphysics on which Mr. Pitt's administration was erected, I demand, in the well-known accents of those who have left us to make a part of it, what laws, what establishments, what distinctions, nay even how long the liberal arts, or commerce itself can survive those perverted manners, and that vitiated state of society in which it is a received opinion that all men are alike,—that the service of our country corrupts our morals—that politicians and statesmen are all rogues, and the rest of those compendious maxims of calumny which form the basis and groundwork of the power of Mr. Pitt and his friends? To have been able to shew that in joining him they departed nothing from their own principle, they should have produced to the public a fair recantation, and a distinct, specific disavowal on the part of the minister, of all such notions. This act was necessary not by way of gratification to their own pride, but in order to discountenance those dangerous opinions which his elevation to office had rendered current. Instead of doing homage to him, the Whigs should have made him do penance to the constitution. I see no principle on which they could join Mr. Pitt before having exacted from him some sort of atonement, which circumstances perhaps might mitigate but could never supersede, except that which confounds all distinction of right

and wrong, and submits whatever we have been used to look to as fixed upon the eternal maxims of justice, to the discretion of a capricious and arbitrary convenience. You ask me, whether I call this a desertion of principle? or whether it is any thing worse than a mistake? What can be worse than a mistake on a subject so serious, I cannot well imagine. If it will gratify any of them to have it believed by one of their old friends that they have not acted from sordid motives, certainly I will not be the person to withhold the testimony of my sincere conviction of it. What will be surmised by others who have not the same opportunities of knowing them, is not so clear. If the most uncharitable opinions should prevail, they may thank the industry of those to whom they have united themselves. If the labours of their whole lives should be resolved at last into an unworthy struggle for power, let them remember to whom it is owing that this habit of thinking is become general among the common people, and applied to all men, and all parties alike.

But the mischief of this ill-starred union does not stop here. It is not that it puts an end to a party combined for certain objects agreed among us all to have been highly beneficial, but that it discourages the hope of forming any similar combinations in future. It is not the public alone who will ask what

confidence can be placed in party professions?—Men who devote themselves to political life will ask what security there is in party connexions? It is mighty well to answer that a truly independent mind will look to no security from such quarters, but confide in its own rectitude. All experience is against these refined notions, and fanciful modes of considering human actions as divested of human motives. There are too many discouraging impediments in the way of those who resolve to fulfil their duties towards you, to admit of our lessening those aids which are derived from the countenance of illustrious names, and the general applause of our fellow citizens. Much has been written in favour of, and against, party connexions; and generally speaking, I have reason to think we differ very little in our opinions respecting them. Assuredly there is no method which our constitution tolerates, of resisting with such good effect the daily encroachments of aspiring power: because the resistance of party is continued; whereas if you trust the cure of your public grievances to the general operation of a spirit of liberty, that cure will be uncertain, but your risques without number. It will be always a chance whether you can excite that spirit; but a question deeply doubtful indeed, how you can govern it. We must not conceal however, that party connexions, by which it is

always best preserved and regulated, although directed towards a popular service, never were of an highly popular estimation. At court they were in worse order still. A marked proscription has very generally attended all such engagements during the present reign. Now figure to yourself, if you can, a situation more unpromising to those who mean fairly your service, if, persecuted by the court for steadily pursuing that service, and discountenanced by the people under the impression that we mean only to serve ourselves, ourselves should be the persons whom least of all we can trust? Think what must be the effect of rendering, as inevitably you will when you destroy the principle of party union, a feeble, intriguing, and distempered court, the only market for the learning and abilities of the kingdom? All but the mere mechanism of politics will vanish from the stage. No competition; no emulation; no sense of glory; no fear of shame; nothing to engage mankind to the state through the medium of their virtues. No more shall we distinguish in the mental attainments of those who aspire, or are destined to eminent stations, that high cultivation so conspicuous in the youth of our present day. The dull stream of despotism will float down weeds and rubbish to choak up every fountain of intelligence. Literature will have no employment but an abject adulation of those,

who alone, and scantily, dole out the means of its precarious existence. With every sense of decent pride will perish all the energies of manly genius. No little mischief will follow the total change in the object of our public animosities. Our contests, instead of being continual but always confined to the modes of administering a fixed constitution, will be rare, but terrible, and every change portend a revolution. Dark conspiracy will succeed to open combination, and from the principles of conspiracy, the gradation is but too obvious to its weapons. Thus are the people separated from their legitimate guardians, and delivered up to the artifices of every daring adventurer. In vain will it be hoped that among so many opposite minds there can be no union. When once these mistaken men who have sought their own safety in the destruction of their party have simplified their differences with those they style the populace by reducing them all to one question, and that a question between property and numbers, the first projector that starts up will give them all the union they need to shew them their prey, and teach them how to seize it.

I know there is a disposition to accede, in the abstract, to most of these opinions. But the times, it is said, call for unanimity, and the oblivion of all former disputes in order to save the state. Men who call upon

us for this in the loud tone of authority, think they have said enough when they declare this great work to be no party business. I am not so much surprised at hearing this language from the quarter from whence it comes, as at the sudden, easy simplicity with which it is adopted by those to whom it is addressed. Acting all my life in a party, and acting *with them*, I never understood, although I have often heard the sentiment pressed upon us by way of reproach, that when any one act particularly wise, just, or salutary was to be carried through, it became a matter with which party not only could have no concern, but which considerations of that nature would rather prejudice than advance. This is, allow me to say, a mere way of talking; a ſtale phrase picked out of that vocabulary of cant which we see now a days in the hands of every upſtart pretender to public virtue. Party engagements are derived from no such sources of illiberality and bigotry. On the contrary; they are of aquality so opposite, as absolutely to exclude the influence of the nearest and the dearest ties unless associated with public principles. There have been times in our history when party was lost in the violence of civil convulsions. I do not think these have bettered your constitution. On the contrary: it always found great difficulty afterwards to recover its tone.

These, and other reflections upon the subject which the length my letter is grown to obliges me to retrench, have long induced me to consider party as a benefit and not as an evil. It is good in its separation. It is good, too, in its union with others; when such union is proposed with a view of preserving party in its objects, and not of destroying those objects. Men who engage with each other on these principles are not at liberty to give up the public cause, blended and made one with their private honour, on any such hacknied invitations. If at any time they should see a necessity for assisting an administration they have been used to oppose, they must beware of taking a step which by destroying their own characters will wholly preclude them from bringing to government any accession of useful strength. They must first be well assured of that degree of change of system which may leave them to the pursuit of their own measures, without fear of interruption. For this they must take securities in the name of the public, by possessing themselves of those official situations which, commanding an enlarged view of the whole of our political situation, may insure the means of carrying prompt succour to its weaker parts. There are occasions, too, on which they must insist upon examples. If the minister whose measures they have been resisting shall, with a view to his own

personal schemes, have raised and let loose against their party a wide, proscriptive, persecuting spirit, which operating possibly beyond his original design, threatens at length to subvert the whole fabric of our mixed government, he is not to be indulged in lamenting the difficulty of restraining it, or encouraged to call out to them for help without a fair recognition of his error, testified by descending from his post. This is no vain punctilio. It is to demand a sacrifice for the constitution. It is the point of honour, where honour is all.

Such were the only terms on which any union of the Whigs with Mr. Pitt could promise either safety to themselves, or eventual of stability to the government. They can scarcely be aware of the extent of what they have conceded. Instead of discovering any circumstances in these times which called for the oblivion of party animosities, they seemed to me to demand of us that we should preserve, with more than usual care, every trace and vestige of them. I thought it infinitely better to go on, as long as we could, with the old dispute of Whig and Tory, than teach men to refer all their causes of complaint to the distinctions of society, and to see only two classes in the state, and those the rich, and the poor. I know of nothing but party which can save, and treasure up the sentiments which help to

keep these extreme disputes at a distance; nor can a true, party spirit, such as we have been used to recognize in this island, be extinguished, except through the operation of the most frightful changes. It is not that these changes can only be produced by public confusion. Dispositions to this effect may be silently and systematically encouraged among the people, teaching them indiscriminate mistrust in the professions of every man. When once their cast of thinking is thoroughly tainted with these suspicions, then is a revolution accomplished, without its tumults indeed but with all its consequences.

We used, my friend, to agree in better days, that the foundation for such a revolution was laid by Mr. Pitt in the year 1784. In my conscience I think that we owe, to the example of that calamitous period, every mischief the country has suffered from the debility of its government at the beginning of these troubles, and from its intemperance now. Then began in effect, and was avowed with all the insolence of power, that system of proscription and monopoly through which a corrupt court draws to its own use the whole authority of the state, which it divides and parcels out by a rule of favouritism to the exclusion of all claim from birth, merit, or services of any kind. To keep this engrossing spirit alive, the worst of

all factions was nourished among the most infatuated of all people. The House of Commons, not in its construction but in its institution, was treated with still less ceremony than ever it has been since in the speculations of the most fanciful reformers. The constituent body was encouraged to look for direct aid from the crown in all disputes with its representative. These thoughtless politicians reserved no provision for cases in which they should have to maintain their own ground against a faction they were stirring up to destroy the influence of the middle ranks. What has followed was natural. The fair, Whig aristocracy is nearly reduced; the court and the mob have quarrelled; and it is now next to a question whether the whole of your government shall not be demolished. To this issue at least they are bringing the contest, unless means be found to stop them in the course of their insane guilt.

You have here, Sir, the reasons of a very plain man, a friend to practical politics, for adhering with what has been esteemed a criminal pertinacity to the principles in which he was educated: who pretends to know little of their abstract value; but having always found that they led him to consistency in your service, feels that he has no other wish than that they should continue to govern his conduct. What would be a re-

medy for the evils of which he thinks your situation full, is more than he has the presumption to pronounce. He is far from confident that all remedies will not come too late. One opinion he is not afraid to risque at all events, and that is, that no very great good is to be expected from an unlimited and implicit confidence in the king's ministers. Whether any better issue may be looked for from a change of men and measures, is a point on which he is by no means unreasonably sanguine. Such an event alone, and supposing it not to arise from a conviction of past errors on the part of both crown and people, he is satisfied would produce only a short suspension of calamity. But the people have much to atone for towards others, before they can be true even to themselves. Suddenly to demand the services of men against whom they have sucked in with malicious relish every species of calumny for these last ten years, to receive that service with ungracious hesitation, to dwell upon its benefits with cold applause, and then probably, in conjunction with a treacherous court and a fawning faction, to turn short round upon us with some cry of fancied mischief, and consign us to disgrace and banishment for the rest of our lives, this, let me tell you, is neither in the right of any people to require, nor, I sincerely hope, in

the folly of any men who value their reputation to comply with. They who are in earnest must come fairly forward with the symbols of penitence as well as conciliation. They who now discover the mischief of tearing asunder the legitimate ties which bound them to the constitution, must resume them with fresh endearments, renovated by a sense of their former folly and misconduct. With gratitude in their hearts, and an honest welcome in their looks, they must turn towards the man whom no threats, no temptation, no injury, no galling memory of ill-requited service, whom not the sacred voice of friendship itself has for one moment biassed from the steady line of his public duty. But unless they resolve to co-operate with him effectually, all effort will be vain: without retarding the fate of our country it will only enhance its severity, and sharpen the appetite of our enemies with the desire of revenge as well as dominion.

If I could see a prospect of their doing this, I should not so entirely despair of the commonwealth. But while there exists a disposition either in the court, or among the people, to temporise with the vanity of a minister, and to pass by all other services lest the delicacy of his ambition should suffer the pain of some humiliation, then is there a ruinous infatuation, and far-gone depravity indeed in our general habit, against which all

further conflict is useless. Who will answer for the consequences? These can be measured by the times alone. With no mediatorial party to modify the pretensions of an irritated and ill-governed people against a weak and misguided court, if those to whom we look for support fail us at this crisis of their fate and our's, if they go on trusting these men until the wide questions of popular rights gain the ascendancy, who will undertake that the multitude shall distinguish the mischief from its cause, or settle, in the balance of their inflamed passions, the blame due to the faults of their government, and that which belongs to the administrators of it? This, whenever it comes, will be the worst of all dangers. We shall not even come to a question upon our constitution. It will slip from under our hands: leaving us to lament the ignominy of so losing it, with the aggravated misfortune of discovering that we shall not have avoided the horrors of civil strife.

It is your business to look to this. For me, whatever may be our common destiny, I shall be numbered with those who have done their utmost to avert this, and every other calamity which has already befallen you. I shall reflect with comfort on having seen to their end the public obligations I had contracted with you. With no hand in the rash measures which precipitated the fall of

the Whig party, I have followed it to the grave in sorrow and mortification. In attending its obsequies I have borne, it is my firm opinion, my share in the last mournful rites of the constitution itself. Death can push his victory no further. Farewel, Sir! After all, I think we have meant the same thing; and that if the present situation of our country left any room for hope, we should not differ in devoutly wishing for an administration which could give us an honourable peace, upon safe terms, which could defend us against France after peace, and provide, both in precept and practice, for the perpetuity, as far as it is in human wisdom, of the free government of this country in all its branches.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

P. 5.	l. 4.	for *even*	read *ever.*
9.	l. 12.	for *suppreſs*	read *surpaſs.*
12.	l. 29.	for *miſchevious*	read *miſchievous.*
59.	l. 8.	for *this debate*	read *the debate.*
do.	l. 18.	for *meditate*	read *mediate.*
70.	l. 11.	for *in*	read *to.*
71.	l. 24.	for *as the degree*	read *as to the degree.*

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